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AN ESSAY  
ON THE  
RELATION IN WHICH THE MORAL PRECEPTS  
OF THE  
**Old and New Testaments**  
STAND TO EACH OTHER.

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TO WHICH WAS ADJUDGED THE HULSEAN PRIZE  
FOR THE YEAR M.DCCC.XLII.

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By JOHN DAVIES, B.A.,  
SCHOLAR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND CURATE OF  
ST GILES-IN-THE-FIELDS, LONDON.

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"I am not come to destroy" the law, "but to fulfil." Matth. v. 17.

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M.DCCC.XLIII.





TO

THE REV. THOMAS CRICK, B.D.

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,  
AND PUBLIC ORATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

THIS ESSAY

IS

(WITH PERMISSION)

INSCRIBED

AS A TESTIMONY OF THE AUTHOR'S

GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM.



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CLAUSES *directed by the FOUNDER to be always prefixed  
to the HULSEAN DISSERTATION.*

---

CLAUSES from the WILL of the REV. JOHN HULSE, late of Elworth, in the county of Chester, clerk, deceased; dated the twenty-first day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven; expressed in the words of the Testator, as he, in order to prevent mistakes, thought proper to draw and write the same himself, and directed that such clauses should every year be printed, to the intent that the several persons, whom it might concern and be of service to, might know that there were such special donations or endowments left for the encouragement of Piety and Learning, in an age so unfortunately addicted to Infidelity and Luxury, and that others might be invited to the like charitable, and, as he humbly hoped, seasonable and useful Benefactions.

He directs that certain rents and profits (now amounting to about a hundred pounds yearly) be paid to such learned and ingenious person, in the University of Cambridge, under the degree of Master of Arts, as shall compose, for that year, the best Dissertation, in the English language, on the Evidences in general, or on the Prophecies or Miracles in particular, or any other particular Argument, whether the same be direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, in order to evince its truth and excellence; the subject of which Dissertation shall be given out by the Vice-Chancellor, and the Masters of Trinity and Saint John's, his Trustees, or by some of them, on New Year's Day annually; and that such Dissertation as shall be by them, or any two of them, on Christmas Day annually, the best approved,

be also printed, and the expense defrayed out of the Author's income under his Will, and the remainder given to him on Saint John the Evangelist's Day following; and he who shall be so rewarded, shall not be admitted at any future time as a Candidate again in the same way, to the intent that others may be invited and encouraged to write on so sacred and sublime a subject.

He also desires, that immediately following the last of the clauses relating to the prize Dissertation, this invocation may be added: "May the Divine Blessing for ever go along with all my benefactions; and may the Greatest and the Best of Beings, by his all-wise Providence and gracious influence, make the same effectual to his own glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures!"

---

SUBJECT proposed by the TRUSTEES  
for the Year 1842:

*"What is the relation in which the Moral Precepts of the Old and New Testament stand to each other?"*



“ Naturalia omnia praecepta communia sunt nobis et illis (Judæis): in illis quidem initium et ortum habuerunt, in nobis autem augmentum et adimpletionem perceperunt. Assentire enim Deo et sequi ejus verbum, et super omnia diligere eum, et proximum sicut seipsum, (homo autem homini proximus) et abstinere ab omni malâ operatione, et quaecunque talia communia utrisque sunt, unum et eundem ostendunt Deum.”

IRENÆUS *adversus Hæreses*, Lib. iv. c. 13.



## CHAPTER I.

### ON THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF LAW.

---

It has pleased God that man should be like the Deity in the possession of this high privilege,—that his actions should not spring from necessity of nature, but from an intelligent and consenting Will. He is thus endowed with a gift, great but yet fearful in its nature; elevating him far above the rest of the creatures of God that inhabit with him this lower world, but connecting him with deep and solemn responsibilities. A stone when thrown into the air necessarily falls to the ground, from the operation of unvarying laws to which it is subject. It has no power of resistance or of motion by any conscious act, and, therefore, can have no moral agency. But man, possessing a higher nature, spiritual in its kind and capable of perception and thought; having the power of bending his mind, by a conscious and independent act, to the object of his choice, is fitted for motives and actions, which, having relation to a standard of right and wrong, are called moral. When different modes of action are presented to his mind, he is able, by the exercise of reason, to examine them;

and then, by a movement of the will, to prefer and adopt whichever he may choose<sup>1</sup>.

Knowledge, therefore, and will are the sources of action in man; and when his mind was in the state of order or spiritual harmony in which his gracious Creator framed it, his reason was perfect in the perception of good, and his will was the ready handmaid of reason in preferring and embracing it. Animating and pure affections made the doing of right a continual source of heavenly joy. The various powers of man's spiritual nature wrought with each other in a beautiful fitness or harmony; reason, enlightened by the grace and presence of God, holding the throne in this spiritual empire. The mind of man was thus a law unto itself, its whole nature being in accordance with the will of Him whose word had called it into being and endowed it with all its rich and peculiar treasures. The inner life, from which the stream of our outward and visible life must ever flow, reflected in its clear surface the nature of Him, who is "glorious in holiness."

Written law, therefore, or a visible rule of action was not necessary to our first parents, whilst their inward purity was yet unstained. The law of God was written within, in "the fleshly tables of their hearts." At every step that man took in the glorious abode provided for him, as the boundless wealth and

<sup>1</sup> Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Book 1.

love of his heavenly Father met his eye, his mind ascended to the great Creator of all, from the impulse of his high and holy nature. The authority and rights of God, as maker of all things, and the consequent duties of man, as the work of His hands, were seen intuitively; for sin had not yet thrown a cloud before his mind, dimming its perceptions and disturbing the correctness of its views. It was not then necessary to remind him of God and of His righteous claims, for God was seen in all things. Love to his heavenly Father—the first and highest claim of our gracious Maker—was fanned and strengthened by every influence that breathed upon his mind or heart. Man, dwelling thus in a region of holiness, and being acted upon by pure influences, walked according to the will of God, and was gladdened in return by God's continual smile.

This happy state did not continue. Sin entered into the minds of our first parents, and exercised an evil influence there, both in clouding and confusing the intellect and in corrupting the will. Of the means adopted by God for the correction of the latter evil, through the agency of His only Son, it is not now our province to discourse. To remedy the former evil, it was necessary that the law of God should be presented to the mind of man in an outward and visible manner<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> "Audeant Judæi qui se solos legem accipisse Domini gloriantur, quod universæ gentes totusque orbis naturalem acceperit legem et idcirco postea lex data sit per Moysen quia prima lex dissipata sit." St Jerome, Comment. in Esaiam.

It was no longer written within, or rather the record was at length almost effaced through man's continued enmity to God. It was therefore revealed anew and committed to writing, that the world might not be without this sacred knowledge. In course of time a nation was selected for the express purpose of taking charge of this rich treasure, "the oracles of God." By preserving the law of God, the Jews became His witnesses against a sinful and degraded world. The height of the requirements which God justly demanded of man, and which He could not lower without diminishing His own perfection, was now expressed in a visible form; so that man's confused and imperfect conceptions of right might be corrected by an unvarying standard.

The claims of God were not affected by man's altered and degraded position. It is not less just that the affections of mankind should be fixed upon their heavenly Father, because they have wandered from God. It is not less true that man is not his own property, and is therefore bound to serve his Creator and Lord with all fidelity, because he does not acknowledge the truth of this statement. The foundations of morality, whether its object be God or our fellow-men, are unchangeable in their nature<sup>1</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> "Unde intelligimus Dei legem etiam ante Moysen, nec in Choreb tantum aut in Sinai et in Eremo primum sed antiquiorem; primum in paradiso, post patriarchis atque ita et Judæis certis temporibus reformatam ut non jam ad Moysi legem ita attendamus



law does not create that which is right or true. It was given to be an abiding and authoritative record of those duties which arise from our unalterable relations to God and to our fellow-beings. It was simply a *revelation* of that which was well known at the first, but which had been forgotten or denied through the ignorance and sinfulness of mankind. The apostle St Paul expresses this nature of the law in connexion with the wickedness of men, when he declares that “by the law is the *knowledge* of sin<sup>2</sup>.”

We mean, therefore, in general by the term LAW, a visible and authoritative rule, revealing and enforcing that which is right either in thought or action. By the word “precepts” we mean the several parts of the whole system of directions which God has given to us for our instruction and control. By “moral precepts” are usually understood the directions which bind us in our intercourse with mankind: but since these arise from our common relations to our heavenly Father, or receive their highest sanction and their noblest character when connected with the laws and affections of godliness, we shall include among them all directions that arise from our abiding relations to God and to our fellow-men.

Moral precepts, whether arising from the remains

quasi ad principalem legem sed ad subsequentem, quam certo tempore Deus et gentibus exhibuit.” Tertull. Adv. Judæos, c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iii. 20.

of man's primitive knowledge, or contained in holy Scripture, derive their authority from God and from God alone<sup>1</sup>. They are consistent with reason, but not dependent upon it for their authority. Reason may discover the principles or relations from which they spring, and may rightly estimate their ultimate effects. It can frequently perceive their adaptation to the circumstances of our position. It can separate that which is permanent through all changes of time and circumstance from the temporary and perishing. It can present the homage of a respectful and devout admiration to the worth and majesty of the moral law. But it cannot do more than investigate and admire<sup>2</sup>. It has no power to bind anything upon our consciences by an authoritative decree. It cannot create the rightfulness and truth which it may perceive. The sanction and authority of moral precepts, by which they are made *laws* to us, arise from the voice and authority of God. "God spake these words," was the solemn and impressive form of introduction, when the law

<sup>1</sup> "Lex naturæ.....est recta et e numine Deorum tracta ratio, imperans honesta, prohibens contraria." Cicero, Philippica, xi. c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Reason is not the Law, nor its measure, neither can any man be sure that any thing is a law of nature because it seems to him hugely reasonable, neither if it be so indeed is it therefore a law; .....for reason can demonstrate, and it can persuade and invite, but not compel any thing but assent, not obedience, therefore it is no law.

"First, or last, that way or another, it (the law of nature) became a law only by the authority and proper sanction of God: God is the author of our nature, and made a law for it." Bp. Jer. Taylor, Law of Nature, Rule 1.

given on mount Sinai was proclaimed to the people of Israel. We have thus that which our circumstances demand;—a distinct and authoritative declaration of right. Reason, weakened by the general corruption of our nature, dimmed and confused by the evil clouds which arise from our earthly affections, cannot now discern clearly at all times that which is right, especially in things pertaining to God<sup>3</sup>. Even when it can clearly discern and reveal, it has no power to command another's obedience. There was therefore a felt necessity among nations not enlightened by the law of God for some deciding power, some authoritative voice, to determine what is spiritually and morally just<sup>4</sup>.

We do not then refer the authority and binding force of the law of God to its consonancy with reason, but directly to the will of Him who gave it. Whatever may be the purposes for which the law may be given, these, when discovered, make obedience more intelligent, but they are not the grounds on which obedience rests. When God speaks to man it is our duty to obey His commands, simply because they are His; before reason has been able to discover the causes of His decrees, supposing them to come within its range. If we defer our obedience until reason has decided the question of right, we exalt the creature

<sup>3</sup> See Lactantius, *De falsâ sap.* Philosoph. Lib. II. c. 2. & 27.

<sup>4</sup> “*Neque enim in Lege ratio quæritur sed auctoritas.*” St Jerome, *Dial. cont. Pelagianos.*

“*Data ergo lex erat ut et quæ scribantur auctoritatem haberent et quæ latere cœperant manifestarentur.*” St Augustine, *Quæst. IV.*

above the Creator. If the act of obedience follow, its nature is vitiated ; for it is an offering made in some measure unto God, but ultimately unto reason as the final cause.

It is necessary that any rule of action, that it may be in strictness of language a Law, should be accompanied by an array of rewards and penalties. It is otherwise *admonition* or *counsel*. The precepts of God are, therefore, attended by many denunciations of punishment against those who neglect and disobey them. The wrath of God is threatened against his enemies. Swift vengeance shall overtake them at length, though for a time it may seem to linger. These denunciations are uttered in the decisive language of Him who is the rightful arbiter of all destinies. “ Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them<sup>1</sup>. ” “ The soul that sinneth, it shall die<sup>2</sup>. ” The penalties which are proclaimed against sin are of the most awful nature, since disobedience is a wrong done to the rightful authority of an infinite Creator. The greatness of the subjects of this law makes a slight degree of punishment impossible ; for since sin necessarily separates man from his Maker, and this separation must continue, unless a mode of reconciliation be provided, the very immortality of our nature makes the consequences of unforgiven sin eternally penal. We have no right to speculate upon this subject. Reason, having no power or right to create

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xviii. 4.



the law, cannot decide upon the penalty attending disobedience. This right is part of His prerogative, by whose power all things were created and by whom they are upheld.

In estimating the majesty and force of the law of God, we cannot but observe, that though reason has no power to ratify any law so that it shall become binding because reason approves it, yet such is the nature of our minds, that we cannot but admit the justice of the laws of God, whenever we are induced to examine them. The mind of man cannot discover the will of God, but when the revelation is made, we cannot withhold our assent to the rightful nature of His demands. An appeal may be made confidently to those who are enlightened by the knowledge of God, claiming for His holy law the homage of the reason and the consent of the will. We have not to teach men, that gratitude for mercies received is a virtue. We need not attempt to prove that a man is bound to make some return for the benefits conferred upon him, if it be in his power to oblige his benefactor. We need no laboured arguments to convince him, that whatever is the work of another can have no right to direct its own acts, irrespective of the will of its author. These are truths that are seen in their own light, and cannot be wholly removed from the view and assent of the intellect. God has not permitted that the corruption of our nature should extend to the confusion of the main principles of right and wrong; nor can the heart become wholly insensible to

their different nature, unless a long course of profligacy has made it utterly corrupt and selfish. There is, therefore, an adaptation of the mind within to the visible law; so that the outward precept and our inward perception of right are in unison with each other. There is an inward tribunal, over which conscience presides, by which the decrees of God are affirmed to be just and binding. An arrangement is thus made, by which the law is brought home to each individual mind and is made effective. It makes submission to the will of God the obedience of an intelligent and moral agent, and thus separates by a broad line of distinction the actions of men from the unconscious workings of mere material things. It gives superior dignity to the homage of man, by making it arise from a perception of the attributes and claims of the Deity and not from the movements of a fixed and unalterable nature.

The law of God contains, therefore, a revelation of the object of spiritual obedience, and is an authoritative statement or record of the duties which arise from the relations in which we stand to the great Original of all being. It supposes that all have an intuitive perception of this truth,—that the right of the Deity to love and obedience on our part is a necessary consequence of his relations to man. “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear<sup>1</sup>?” There is no essential difference between the love which

<sup>1</sup> Mal. i. 6.

a dutiful son has towards a kind parent and that affection which God claims from us, as the offspring of His infinite power and love. There is in all a perception of the propriety of such an affection on the part of a son. The word of God comes forth with a revelation of His relations to us, and on the ground of these relations claims from us both love and submission to our heavenly Father. It is an abiding and visible record of these things, that all ages may know the nature and will of God. It is an unchanging standard of right by which the mind of man may correct and enlarge its ideas of moral duty, whenever they become confused and imperfect through the corrupting influences of sin. It is a witness for God against a rebellious and self-degrading world. It speaks with distinctness that it may confound the sophist, and with authority that it may awe the presumptuous. It shews as in a mirror the perfect holiness of its Author. It reveals the originally high and noble state of our first parents by whom such a law could be obeyed. It is a record by which the sinfulness of man may become manifest to himself, from a comparison of its just requirements with his unholy nature and actions, and thus it prepares him for a joyous reception of the rich and gracious plan of redemption from sin, which God has wrought out for us through the mediation of His Son, Jesus Christ.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POSITIVE AND MORAL PRECEPTS.

---

THE precepts of which we have treated in the preceding chapter are those which arise immediately from the relations in which we stand towards God, or from our connexion with other men as members of one common brotherhood. These are called *moral* precepts. There are others in the word of God which are not perceived to arise from these relations, but are to be received solely because they are commanded by God. These are termed *positive* precepts. The first are unchangeable, because they spring from relations which are the same from age to age. The latter may be changed by a direct command of God, modifying or abrogating a former precept, or by a change in the nature of the circumstances from which they arise. When God spake to the children of Israel, and proclaimed the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," the duty of loving God with all the strength and purity of an incorrupt affection did not then begin. It had existed from the very moment in which man was framed out of the dust of

the earth, and God breathed into him “ the breath of life.” This law was known and obeyed more perfectly in the garden of Eden, when our race was not yet polluted by sin, than at any other period of our history. But when God commanded the people of Israel to keep the passover with its peculiar ceremonies<sup>1</sup>, or to leave the land of Israel untilled every seventh year<sup>2</sup>, he laid upon them obligations which had not existed before the giving of the command. Like the Prætorian edicts, they were to be obeyed from the authority of the law-giver, but might be recalled or modified by succeeding proclamations, if new circumstances made a change necessary. They were equal to the rest of the laws of God in authority so long as they were in being, but were not in their own nature equally imperative<sup>3</sup>.

We have reason to suppose that these distinctions were clearly understood by the Jews at the time when the laws of God were first made known to them. The positive laws given to Moses were for the most part confined to the land of Judæa. These are the words of the Jewish lawgiver to the people of Israel. “ The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words but saw no similitude, only a voice. Then he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to do, the Ten Commandments, and wrote them upon two tables of stone. And

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> See Thorndike's Epilogue, c. 12. Bp. Jer. Taylor's Rule of Conscience, Lib. ii. c. 2. Robert's *Myst. et Medulla Bibliorum*, Lib. ii. c. 4.



the Lord commanded me *that same time*, that I should teach you ordinances and laws, which ye should observe in the land whither ye go to possess it." When the ten commandments had been rehearsed, the Patriarch adds immediately—"These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire<sup>1</sup>." He reminds them that, when they were terrified by the awful manifestations of Jehovah's presence, they besought him to go near unto God, and to hear for them whatever He might say for their direction. God was pleased to allow this arrangement to be made. He commanded the children of Israel to go to their tents again, and addressing his servant Moses, said: "But as for thee, stand thee here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it." Thus the moral law was called a *covenant*,—was made known to the assembled host of Israel while they were standing before mount Sinai,—and was attended with strange and awful solemnities: the precepts of the ceremonial and judicial law were called *statutes* or *judgments*,—were delivered to Moses alone, without the fearful signs that accompanied the proclamation of the moral law,—and were to be observed only in the land of Judæa<sup>2</sup>.

The positive precepts of the former dispensation

<sup>1</sup> Deut. iv. and v.

<sup>2</sup> Hooker's Eccles. Pol. Book III. c. 11.

served to remind the Jews of their close connexion with the one true God, the Maker and Lord of all things, and of the duty of submission to His revealed will. They tended to impress upon the wandering and rebellious minds of this chosen people, that the will of God is the ultimate source of all law, and gives to law its authority<sup>3</sup>. There might be given to the moral law the unhesitating assent of the reason, and thus there might follow, in course of time, a forgetfulness of their relation to God, and of the duty of obedience to His supreme authority. The moral law, especially in relation to our fellow-men, might seem to derive its being from the necessities of our social position, and its authority either from human tribunals or a self-imposed command. Human passions also will here have influence. Pride will often animate men to the discharge of duties, the neglect of which would be attended with shame and dishonour; and the instincts of natural affection will impel them to the fulfilment of others. There may be then no recognition of the claims of God, no manifestation of love towards Him in the performance of many acts, whose outward and visible nature conscience must approve. Our moral duties may gradually be separated from the feelings

<sup>3</sup> “καὶ γὰρ βρωμάτων τινῶν ἀπέχεσθαι προσέταξεν ὑμῖν ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔχητε τὸν Θεόν.” Justin Martyr, Dial. cum Tryph. c. 20.

“In ipsis enim temporalibus et carnalibus votis atque signis quamvis quomodo spiritaliter essent intelligenda nescirent, unum tamen didicerunt venerari eternum Deum.” St Augustine, de doct. Christ. Lib. III.

and services of godliness, and thus lose their completeness and worth. There is, however, in positive precepts, a direct and manifest connexion between the precept and its author. Separated from the revealed will of God, there is no apparent reason why they should be performed, and from this circumstance they excite attention to the divine command. We perceive the working of this principle in the ceremonies of the Passover. Many interesting rites were enjoined in commemoration of the wonderful deliverance from the tyranny of Pharaoh, which God had wrought out for His people. These would naturally attract the attention of the young, and would lead to enquiry. For these purposes, among others, they were instituted. "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, 'What mean ye by this service?' that ye shall say, 'It is the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses'."¹

It is necessary also to observe that, since the government of the Jewish nation was at first a Theocracy, the law of Moses contained a system of judicial polity, whose several parts were especially adapted to the peculiar position of the Jewish people, and to their national character. This was not designed to be permanent or universal². Nor does this liability to

¹ Exod. xii. 26, 27.

² For a curious instance of misconception on this subject, see

change in their judicial system affect the perfection and immutability of its author. His very perfection of wisdom may lead to change in arrangements of this nature. The excellence of a form of judicial or civil polity will depend upon its adaptation to the nature and circumstances of those for whom it is designed, and when these are no longer the same as when the system or polity was given, a change may be advantageous or even necessary. This part of our subject is illustrated by our Lord's remarks on the question of divorce. Our Saviour abrogated that part of the Jewish law which gave permission to divorce (except in the case of fornication) by saying, "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder<sup>3</sup>." The Jews who heard Him, objected, that this restriction was contrary to the law of Moses. Our Lord replied, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." The duty of love toward each other, on the part of those who were bound by this sacred tie, was part of the moral law, and was abiding: the permission to unloose the bond itself was part of the civil polity, and might afterwards be taken away.

Positive precepts, therefore, differ from the moral law by being temporary in their nature. They may

the Controversy between Knox the Reformer and the Secretary Maitland, in M<sup>c</sup> Crie's *Life of John Knox*.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xix. 6—8.

be utterly made void, as in the instance of causeless divorce; or may be modified, as in the case of the sacraments of the church. They admit of change, but only by the authority of Him who first ordained them. Whilst they continue in being, they are as binding upon our consciences as any part of the moral law, for they rest upon the same foundation. Whilst the rite of circumcision was the appointed method of introduction into the church of God, no Jewish parent was at liberty to neglect or despise it. And now since God has chosen to substitute for it the rite of baptism, this sacred ordinance is binding upon Christians, with the same authority as that of circumcision was upon the Jews. It is enjoined by a positive precept, but this is a LAW to us, since it is the will of God. We are not more at liberty to neglect it than any part of the moral law; though the latter, arising from unalterable relations, partakes of the permanency of its source.

It is necessary to attend to these distinctions between positive and moral precepts, lest the relation of the preceptive parts of the Jewish and Christian dispensations should be misunderstood; since the principles that may be applied to one class of precepts are frequently inapplicable to the other. Much of the licentious reasoning, by which evil men have sometimes endeavoured to pervert and degrade our christian faith, has been founded on a wilful blending together of these two different classes of precepts. They would



make the moral law partake of the temporary nature which belongs solely to the positive precepts, and would infer that Christianity, in abolishing the latter part of the Jewish economy, has also abrogated the former.

## CHAPTER III.

ON THE NATURE OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS AS REVELATIONS OF DIVINE TRUTH.

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SINCE the performance of duty depends on the extent of our knowledge, as well as on the purity of the will, it will be necessary to examine the nature of the dispensations contained in the Old and New Testaments, considering them as revelations from God to man. Precepts flow directly from principles or doctrines. They are the practical workings of principles, their necessary and logical consequence ; or they derive from principles their sanction and authority. When God gave the ten commandments to the children of Israel, He prefaced them by the assertion of His nature and of His relations to them. "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me<sup>1</sup>." In like manner the Apostle St Peter, after affirming that all material things, all the wealth and pomp of the world, shall be destroyed, and that the day of the Lord shall come to the perdition of ungodly men, urges upon Christians the

<sup>1</sup> Deut. v. 6.

practical consequence of such truths. “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless<sup>2</sup>.”

The nature of the precepts of any system of morals must depend, therefore, on the primary truths which it contains, just as the breadth and clearness of a stream on the nature of its sources. When the tenets are false in theory, an evil system of morals will be the necessary result. When Mahomet asserted this principle of his creed—that death in battle against the enemies of his faith merited Paradise—the precept, to establish his cause against infidels by the sword, and the practice of his followers in carrying war and devastation into the territories of their religious foes, followed as the necessary inferences of the doctrine. Precepts are thus the embodying of abstract principles, so that they become palpable and directive, having a visible force and authority.

The process of forming these precepts or practical conclusions can generally be performed by the reason, when the truths on which they rest have been perceived or made known by revelation. There is no difference, in this respect, whether the truths considered have relation to human or divine things. The processes of mathematical science, by which accurate deductions may be drawn from the facts of the material

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 14.

world, might be known before the true system of the universe was discovered<sup>1</sup>. And when science had penetrated the heavens, and brought to light the facts of a celestial world, there might be no necessity for new processes by which its laws might be investigated. As discovery advances by the invention of new scientific aids, the same processes may be applied in the investigation of the additional facts discovered, as in the previous revelations. And so when, by a divine revelation, the facts of the heavenly and invisible world were made known to man, there was no necessity for any new processes of the mind, by which the practical conclusions of the revealed truth might be deduced. The same process, by which it was wrought out in his mind that gratitude is due to an earthly benefactor, would teach him that it is due also to his heavenly benefactor, when revelation has made him acquainted with the being to whom he owes life and support. The difference in the requirements of the Jewish and Christian dispensations does not arise from any change in the methods by which their directions are deduced from the given principles, but from the different nature of the principles or truths themselves of which they are the proper and legitimate consequence. Hence arises the necessity of a revelation from God to man, that the facts on which moral science rests, and which reason could not discover, might be made known. Hence too, the superior nature of our Christian system in its moral precepts over that of the Jews, in its

<sup>1</sup> See Chalmers on Natural Theology.

richer revelations of those high truths, from which obedience to God and good-will to men must flow, as a proper and manifest inference.

In considering the Jewish dispensation, we observe that it is to a great extent *local* in its requirements, and *symbolical* in its mode of instruction.

Every male was commanded to appear thrice in the year at Jerusalem<sup>2</sup> to offer up sacrifices,—a law which could only be observed by those who dwelt near the Mediterranean. The promises made in the Jewish covenant were principally of the possession and the fertility of the land of Judæa, and in these promises none but the children of Israel could share. Such requirements and promises evidently point to the accomplishment of a temporary purpose. They were fitted for the direction of a people appointed for a time to take charge of an important trust. They were, therefore, bound to one central point and fixed in one territory, that their unity might be preserved. We perceive from these instances that the former dispensation contained a system of truths and precepts, the whole of which was not designed for mankind universally. It was not addressed to men every where, simply from their participation in the common attributes of humanity, but to the children of Israel in particular, for the accomplishment of a specific and temporary design.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxiv. 23.



The method by which the Jewish church was instructed in spiritual things was principally by figures, by outward and visible representations of truth. There were distinct statements of the Being and Providence of God, and of His just claims; but the mode by which satisfaction might be made to divine Justice for the wrong done by sin, and in reliance on which sufficient atonement man might draw near to God; the operations of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of those who truly worship; the purposes of God in behalf of the church on earth, and the blessedness of God's people after death; these were subjects which were taught principally by type and shadow. The daily sacrifices sent up their incense to heaven, as types of the one offering afterwards to be made by the Son of God. The blood that was sprinkled before the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies by the High Priest, represented the atonement which the Saviour should afterwards plead before the throne of his Father. The perfect state of the victims offered to God, and "the daily washings," taught the Jewish worshippers the necessity of holiness, that they might be acceptable to Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Every thing connected with the worship of the temple was typical. In the language of the apostle St Paul, the law was "a figure for the time then present<sup>1</sup>." It was the "example and shadow of heavenly things"—the *ὑπόδειγμα*, the *sketch* or *emplar*—"something," in the words of a late commen-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. viii. 5. ix. 9.

tator, "like the strokes pencilled out upon a piece of fine linen, which exhibit the figures of leaves and flowers, but have not received their splendid colours and curious shades<sup>2</sup>." The Jewish dispensation was, therefore, of a dim and shadowy nature, compared with Christianity, which is distinct and full. It was the uncertain dawn, not opposed to the glorious light and beauty of the mid-day, but giving only a token and assurance of the coming brightness.

The peculiar nature of the Jewish dispensation, as a revelation from God, was attended with two sources of imperfection. It was *incomplete*, for the shadow cannot give more than an outline of the substance. It was *indistinct*, for its rites admitted of more than one interpretation, and the spiritual meaning might escape the gross intellect of the multitude. Its truths were great and eternal, but they were partially veiled; so that their full proportions and surpassing excellence were in some degree concealed<sup>3</sup>. This mode of instruction might be serviceable to a gross and earthly people, who needed to be reminded of invisible things by outward forms and shadows. But it gave token of a

<sup>2</sup> Heb. viii. 5. See Dr Bloomfield's Greek Testament, where the passage is quoted.

<sup>3</sup> "Κατὰ τοῦτο τοῖνυν λέγει τὸ, οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος, καθὸ πάντα τύποι ἦσαν, πάντα σκια, περιτομή, θυσία, σάββατον, ἃ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν διαβῆναι εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν· διὰ τοῦτο παραχωρεῖ καὶ ὑπερίσταται· ἐπεισαγωγὴ δὲ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος δι' ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ Θεῷ." St Chrysostom, Hom. in Epist. ad Heb. xiii.

happier period, when the veil should be removed, and truth should be seen in undimmed brightness and in full, complete, harmony. There is so much grossness in the mind of man, now degraded and enervated by sin, that it continually descends to mere material things. It will not rise to the spiritual realities shadowed forth by outward rites, unless disciplined and aided by rich measures of God's Holy Spirit. The corrupt and perverse minds of the Jews too frequently rested in the outward service, and lost sight of its heavenly meaning. In a spiritual sense, they did not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their heart, and God sent judicial blindness upon them as a punishment.

The principal subjects more fully revealed in our Christian faith are the love of God towards our sinful race, the highest and most glorious manifestation of His love having been given in the death and resurrection of His well-beloved Son ; the rich measures of grace and holiness which may now be enjoyed by the people of God, since Christ is made " Head over all things to the church ;" the purpose of God to bless and sanctify all nations of the earth by the Gospel of Christ ; and the great truths that concern our after-life, the judgment of the last day, and the eternal states of mankind. These truths are taught with a clear and distinct voice by Christianity alone. So few and indistinct were the ideas even of the Jews concerning an eternal life, that the apostle St Paul

affirms of our Lord, that He “brought life and immortality to light.” These were subjects known only to a few, and but dimly to the most favoured : but now they stand in a full clear light, so that all may understand them. The uncertain light of the former dispensation has passed away, and the “day-spring from on high” hath risen to enlighten and bless the whole race of mankind.

Truths of this nature have a very powerful influence upon practice, both from the feelings which they tend to excite, and from the expansion which they give to the mind which contemplates them. The Jewish dispensation was local in its nature. The selfishness of man perverted its confined, though not exclusive, character to minister to a perverse and unsocial temper. Christianity is universal as the light to which it is often compared. It knows no country or clime. It takes cognizance only of the fundamental relations of mankind, and proclaims to all nations the same privileges and the same duties. It is the message of God to the whole circle of his rebellious creatures, and makes known a covenant of mercy, by which all are bound in one holy fellowship, founded upon common blessings. Thus it tends to destroy the narrow prejudices of the Jews, and to foster in all the spirit of kindness and love. How mighty too is the influence of the last great day, the day of trial and judgment, upon the minds and the daily life of those who seriously contemplate it ! How strongly does the infinite

love of God to us prompt to love towards Him in return ! And love delights to manifest itself by willing obedience.

These influences were doubtless felt in a high degree by some who lived under the former dispensation. There were some, who being raised, like Abraham, above their contemporaries, saw the day of Christ and rejoiced in the prospect. They were enlightened by richer degrees of heavenly knowledge, just as the tops of a mountain may be lighted up by the sun, whilst his slant rays may have only partially penetrated into the lower parts, and may not have reached others at all. In the minds of the majority there was a felt incompleteness in the former system. There was a restlessness in the public mind, that shewed a dim perception of its wants. Hope was ever in exercise. Imagination, nourished by prophecy, indulged in gorgeous dreams of the future. It was known by the Jews that a mighty Deliverer would arise, and that a change in the aspect of the world would be wrought by him ; but their dull and earthly minds thought only of visible greatness, the illusive splendour attending war and victory and extended empire. Had they listened to one of their own prophets, they might have learned that God was about to bless his people, not with earthly greatness and pomp, but with ampler knowledge and richer spirituality. He designed to lead them to higher attainments in love and obedience. " Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will



make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. . . . This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxi. 31, 33.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE SUBSTANTIAL IDENTITY OF THE TWO DISPENSATIONS AS SYSTEMS OF MORAL PRECEPTS.

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FROM the reasonings of the preceding chapter it is evident, that since precepts flow from primary truths or principles as their source, the moral precepts of the two covenants will be related to each other in the same manner as their doctrinal parts. Their moral systems, therefore, rest upon the same base. They are identical in their main outlines; but Christianity being a more distinct and expanded revelation of truth, its moral system is more wrought out and complete than that of the Jewish economy. The relation is not one of opposition: there is no hostility of principles: the difference arises from the growth or ampler development of the same primitive stock. In the constitution of Christianity there is no abrogation of the moral law, distinguished from the ceremonial and judicial parts of the former system, but an embodiment of it in a nobler and more comprehensive code. It is not rejected, but absorbed; not annihilated, but formed anew in a heavenly manner. This part of the former dispensation is not local or temporary in its nature, but is connected with relations that are timeless and universal. The relation, there-

fore, which we seek to establish between the two systems as codes of moral duties, is one of identity in the main features and primary constituents of morality: Christianity being new in the greater number of truths which it reveals, and in the greater completeness and excellence of its moral precepts. In the language of Bishop Jeremy Taylor: "In the schools of Moses they practised the first rudiments of perfection, but Christ was the last and, therefore, the most perfect lawgiver, and they that did commence under Moses, the servant of God, were to proceed under Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and therefore the Apostle calls Christ, *τέλος τοῦ νόμου*;" and again, "the old commandments are explicated by new commentaries, and are made to be laws in new instances to which by Moses they were not obliged; and some of those excellent sayings which are respersed in the Old Testament, and which are the dawns of the evangelical light, are now part of that body of light that derives from the Sun of Righteousness, insomuch that a commandment which was given of old was given again in a new manner and to new purposes, and to more eminent degrees, and therefore is also called a new commandment<sup>1</sup>."

It is evident that the relation between the two moral systems must be one of identity in the main outlines, since the circumstances of our race remain in substance unaltered. The duty of love to God and to each other must, therefore, be equally a part of both

<sup>1</sup> Rule of Conscience, Part II. Rule 4.

systems, however much in our holy faith the incitements and motives to the discharge of this duty, and the measure of the requirement may be increased. If Christianity has been supposed, by some to be contrary to the former system in its moral laws, the error has arisen from the idea that moral obligations arise from the proclamation of them by a message to mankind. This is the case with respect to positive or ceremonial precepts. The precept in these instances creates the duty. The obligation expires with the abrogation of the system to which they belong. But with regard to moral obligation, the duty rests upon a different basis. The written law is here only a visible and abiding record of the claims and duties which existed before it, and from which the law itself proceeds.

The Jewish and Christian dispensations are in this respect the representatives of that which exists separately from themselves. They are revelations of truths, some of which mankind knew imperfectly before, and others of which they were utterly ignorant, but they do not create these truths nor the duties that spring from them. If then Christianity, by revealing truth distinctly, has made the figures of the former dispensation unnecessary, and by addressing itself to the whole race of mankind has thrown off local requirements and forms of civil polity, it has not altered those relations which, being inherent in human nature, are independent of time and place, nor the obligations which they create. On the contrary, it has confirmed those acknowledged

before and has revealed others that were unknown: it has added new sanctions and additional motives: it has provided clearer and ampler knowledge, and proclaimed the appointment of richer supplies of divine aid. Hence it requires in many instances a higher measure of obedience, from the nobler nature of its revelations and promises.

The Jewish and Christian systems are both the work of the same Almighty Creator and Lawgiver, and must therefore bear the impress of one common authorship. They are the work of Him who is absolutely perfect, and therefore the same from age to age “without variableness or shadow of turning.” We cannot infer from the attribute of Immutability that there may not be different degrees of revelation given to man, in such proportions and at such times as infinite wisdom may appoint,—for this attribute affects not the *degree* but the *nature* of His manifestations—but we may argue that the truths and requirements of one divine system cannot be essentially opposite to those of another. “I am the Lord, I change not,” is the solemn and sublime declaration of God; and therefore the moral law, which is the mirror of His perfection, cannot essentially vary.

We perceive from the sacred records, that the things which were acceptable to God in the Mosaic or Prophetical age were commended by him in succeeding times. The holy works of His people recorded in the



Old Testament are mentioned with honour in the New, and this honour is evidently awarded according to principles fixed and immutable. The faith and obedience of Abraham; the righteousness of Elias; the noble conduct of Moses, “who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;” the fortitude of the holy men of old, “who had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings;”—all these instances are commended in the New Testament in the same manner as in the Old<sup>1</sup>. These facts give the impress of unity to the two systems. We hear the same voice, we see the same hand in each. We have in each precisely the same aspect with regard to human conduct, and therefore the examples of the one dispensation are also the examples of the other.

Moreover, since the purpose for which God raised up the separate nation of the Jews is substantially the same as that for which He has framed the Christian church, the moral laws established for their guidance must be the same in substance. The Jewish nation was appointed to be the depositary of divine truth, and to show forth the glory of God amidst a world darkened and corrupted by sin. It was honoured by God above other nations, that His name “might be known among the heathen.” The law and the people were to be formed after the same model, that by their holiness they might represent the purity of Him who framed them. Thus the Psalmist writes: “Thou shalt arise and have

<sup>1</sup> James ii. 21—23. v. 17. Heb. xi.

mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory<sup>2</sup>." In like manner, the members of the Christian church are "a chosen generation," appointed for the purpose of preserving and making known an ampler revelation, and of showing forth "the praises (*ἀρετὰς*—the *virtues* or *perfections*) of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light<sup>3</sup>." Both the dispensations are parts of one great system, devised for the display of the glory of Him who has appointed them in wisdom and love. Each system was to set forth the holiness and justice of God, and hence the spirit which was to animate each dispensation and the law, which is the embodiment of that spirit, must be the same in nature, though not necessarily of the same amplitude and purity. There may be expansion and increase in the later system, compared with the former; but there can be no opposition, since the glory of Him who is unchangeably the same from age to age cannot be displayed by opposing and hostile precepts.

Our Lord has distinctly explained the purpose of his coming, with reference to the Jewish moral law, in his sermon on the Mount of Beatitudes. He was about to correct many of the false glosses which the Rabbis had made upon the law of God, and to expand the original requirements of the law by spiritual mea-

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cii. 13—15.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9.

asures and degrees. Lest, however, he should be supposed to direct his censures against the law itself, and not against false interpretations of the law, he guards against this error in the very beginning of his discourse. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our Lord evidently assumes that his hearers could accurately distinguish between good and evil. The moral ideas of his audience were admitted to be correct in essential points, and these ideas were such as the law of the previous dispensation had imparted. The only change he would introduce was that of expansion. "Think not," he adds, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to *fulfil*. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled<sup>1</sup>." Parkhurst<sup>2</sup> explains the word translated "to fulfil" (πληρῶσαι) thus—"to *fulfil* the types and prophecies, to perform *perfect obedience* to the law of God in his own person, and fully to *enforce* and *explain*

<sup>1</sup> Matth. v. 17, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Parkhurst's Lexicon, Rose's Ed. Mr Rose adds (from Vitringa) this meaning under the word πληρώω, "To teach, to explain fully. This seems a Chaldaism, for the word גמַר, to *fill* or *perfect*, is used by the Chaldee paraphrasts to express *teaching*, whence comes the name of the Gemara." See Vitringa, Obs. Sac. Lib. i. Diss. 3. c. 5. Compare Rom. xv. 19, "πεπληρωκέμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον," "I have fully preached the gospel:" and Col. iv. 12, "πεπληρωμένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ Θεοῦ," "completely instructed in all the will of God."

it by his doctrine." Wahl<sup>3</sup> translates it "to perfect." Schleusner<sup>4</sup> gives this interpretation—"to explain fully and confirm the authority of the law." The sense then of our Lord's words will be, "I am not come to destroy the moral precepts of the law, but to explain and enforce them; for the moral law, resting on an immoveable basis, cannot be abrogated or essentially changed. The visible law shall not, in this part, suffer the loss of its least portion, until all its promises and threatenings be finally fulfilled at the last day." The precepts of the Jewish dispensation are therefore not annulled by the law of Christ, but incorporated into it. The law still lives and with a more spiritual and heavenly life.

To this purport the eloquent Chrysostom explains the passage in his Homilies on St Matthew. "Note here how he commends the ancient covenant, making a commixture of one with the other, by which he shews that they are kindred and of the same family; for the greater and the less are of the same kind. Therefore he accuses not the ancient law, but wishes it to be increased and extended; but if it had been evil he would not have sought for an expansion of it, neither would he have regulated it, but would have cast it out." And again, "He reminds them always of the former sayings, that he may show that he propounds not things contrary to them, but agreeing therewith;

<sup>3</sup> Wahl. *Clavis Nov. Test. Phil. sub voce.*

<sup>4</sup> Schleusner. *Lexicon in Nov. Test. sub voce.*

extending them, but not overturning; rightly directing them, but not destroying<sup>1</sup>."

These remarks are confirmed by the remainder of our Lord's discourse, for it does not contain an abrogation of any part of the moral law. On the contrary, this part of the law is confirmed and expanded by additional sanctions and motives and in spiritual degrees. A more pure and heavenly spirit is breathed into it; so that it is more fitted to become the outward expression of a covenant "established upon spiritual promises." Thus in one important sense the ancient prophecy concerning our Lord Jesus Christ is fulfilled. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake: he will magnify the law and make it honourable<sup>2</sup>."

Upon another occasion the Saviour was careful to prevent any misconception of the purport of his more spiritual dispensation. He was enforcing the necessity of an unreserved devotion of the heart to God, and the opposition between a covetous lover of earthly things and the spiritual service due to our heavenly Father. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon<sup>3</sup>," were

<sup>1</sup> Homil. in Matth. xvi. et xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah xl. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xvi. 13—18. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every



his impressive words. The proud and earthly-minded Pharisees derided him. They appear to have thought his statements unnecessarily strict and spiritual. He reminds them that He, whom they professed to serve, knoweth all hearts, and that visible services, however fair and imposing in appearance, if unaccompanied with inward and spiritual devotion, are an abomination in the sight of God. He proceeds to tell them that the law (considered as representing a religious dispensation) and the prophets, were until John, but that now a better system than the one which they equally gloried in and degraded should be established. The kingdom of God was about to be set up, that spiritual kingdom, long foretold by the prophets, a new dispensation in which the services of the Jewish ritual should no longer have place. But lest they suppose that any part of the moral law should be destroyed, he adds immediately, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." He designed to present it in a new form, as part of a higher and more spiritual system. The law would henceforward require a cautious abstinence from defilement in many things which the former dispensation had permitted on account of their perverseness and obduracy. As an instance of this greater purity our Lord declares that the former permission with regard

man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery."

to divorce should be destroyed, as inconsistent with the "law of love," about to be made fully known and permanently established. The only change therefore was that of progression, the full development of that which had existed before in a less ample degree.

The same important lesson was taught when the young and amiable ruler came to our Lord inquiring, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Saviour referred him to the ten commandments, doubtless with the intent of showing to him more fully the spiritual requirements infolded in the letter of the law. The young man eagerly replied, apparently with a glow of self-satisfaction. "All these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?" Our Lord then endeavoured to lead him to the spiritual demands of the law. He enforced the necessity of renouncing the love of the world,—of rising above a mere visible subjection to the law, to an unreserved surrender of the affections to heavenly things,—to be testified in this instance by giving up all earthly possessions. If he would follow Christ, he must add to his outward morality a spiritual measure, drawn from the holy nature of the law written by the spirit of God upon the hearts of Christ's true disciples. Here was no abrogation of the least part of the moral law, no alteration of its essential elements. Our Lord directed him to rise to a higher degree of obedience, to aim at new acquirements, however painful might

<sup>1</sup> Luke xviii. 18—24. Matth. xix. 16—23.

be the process of their attainment. He was not to leave undone that which he had done before, but to consecrate it by the hallowing power of heavenly principles, and expand it according to the height of a spiritual standard.

We shall find that there is the same recognition of the enduring nature of the *moral* law in the writings of the holy Apostles. They used the word "law" in different senses, and it is necessary to understand these different meanings to arrive at a correct knowledge of their works. The corrupt reasonings of licentious perverters of Christianity have rested generally on a perverse misapplication of these different meanings of the word.

The word "law" is often used by them to denote the ceremonial part of the Mosaic dispensation, and in this sense the law is abrogated by the bringing in of a more spiritual system. The various but splendid rites of the Mosaic economy were adapted to a gross and ignorant people. They represented heavenly things in a visible and palpable form. They were "elements," suited to a nation or people in a state of pupillage. But when the Church was enriched by larger measures of the Holy Spirit they were no longer necessary; just as the mode of instruction which a child may require is no longer necessary when the understanding is fully ripened. Christianity has freed us from the burdensome ceremonies of the former covenant, and in this

sense therefore we are no longer “under the law, but under grace<sup>1</sup>.”

The word is also employed to express the covenant of works made with man in his primitive state of spiritual strength and purity. The laws of God, of which the written law was afterwards the visible expression, were the foundation on which this covenant rested. The language of God with reference to his law was, “This do and thou shalt live.” But when man fell from his pure and noble state, it became impossible for him to obtain life by performing the requirements of the law. The defect was not in the law but in those who were subject to it<sup>2</sup>. The law could not save in that “it was weak through the flesh<sup>3</sup>.” Therefore, since we are hopelessly condemned by the law, God has been pleased to show forth his mercy and truth in providing a vicarious sacrifice for us, that the demands of justice might be satisfied, and a covenant of mercy might be established, through the death and intercession of his Son. Him hath God “set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood<sup>4</sup>,” is the language of the Apostle St Paul. “The righteousness of God is unto all and upon all them that believe.” We are no longer then under the law as a cove-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> “*Superbiam illorum volens domare Deus dedit legem tamquam dicens ‘Ecce, implete, ne putetis deesse jubentem.’ Non deest qui jubeat sed deest qui impleat.*” St Augustine, in Johan. Evang. c. 1. Trac. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. iii. 25. and 22.

nant of life. Forgiveness of sin, of which it can know nothing, is offered to all who truly repent and trust in Christ for salvation; because it is impossible for us to procure eternal life by perfect obedience, through the corruption of our nature<sup>5</sup>. This impossibility is shown by the contrast of the holy requirements of the law, and our unholy thoughts and actions. Hence “the law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ<sup>6</sup>.” We are brought by it to renounce all trust in our own works as a ground of justification before God, and to plead for mercy in the exercise of an humble trust in a crucified Redeemer. Thus the Apostle St Paul affirms: “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified<sup>7</sup>,” “for if righteousness come by the law”—if we were able to claim its blessings by an absolutely perfect observance of its precepts,—“then Christ is dead in vain.” But we have not kept its commands, and are under its awful curse. “In the fulness of time,” therefore, Christ came “to redeem them that were under the law”—under the condemnation of the violated law—“that we might receive the adoption of sons<sup>8</sup>.” We thus recover the privileges which our first parents enjoyed in their un-sinful state<sup>9</sup>. We have the smile and blessing of our reconciled Father. The intercourse between God and

<sup>5</sup> “Lex peccatorum nescit remissionem: lex mysterium non habet quo occulta purgantur et ideo quod in lege minus est in Evangelio consummatur.” St Ambrose, in Luc. Lib. vi. c. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Gal. iii. 24.    <sup>7</sup> Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 21.    <sup>8</sup> Gal. iv. 4, 5.

<sup>9</sup> See Hooker’s Sermons on Habakkuk i. 4, and on Jude 17—21. Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. 10. Bp. Hall’s Works, Vol. ix., “On the Old Religion.”



us is renewed ; for unforgiven sin is the only barrier that prevents communion between God and man.

We are no longer, therefore, under the law as the sole covenant of eternal life, on the condition of absolutely perfect obedience ; nor has any one of our race been subject to it in this sense, since the time when the first promise of a Redeemer was made to mankind. Does the obligation of the moral law therefore cease ? By no means. The obligation is eternal. “ What then,” says the Apostle, “ shall we sin because we are no longer under the law but under grace ? God forbid<sup>1</sup>. ” He affirms the effect to be, that sin shall not have dominion over us. Through the covenant of mercy we are laid under new obligations to serve God in newness of life. We are able to receive strength and guidance from the power and wisdom of God, that we may be able to walk in the way of His commandments. The Spirit is imparted to sanctify our affections and motives, and thus to write the law of God on the tables of the heart. We have rich promises given for the purpose of animating us to holy obedience. The law is thus made a practicable and living rule instead of being, through the corruption of our nature, a dead and powerless letter. We establish the law “ through faith<sup>2</sup>. ” It is established, not in its abstract right, but in its rule over the thoughts and actions of men. Its principles are wrought out in the heart, and hence the law becomes not merely a rightful but an actual sovereign, to whose

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iii. 31.

authority every faculty of the renewed spirit yields a willing homage.

In another passage the same argument is used by St Paul, who is ever careful, after the example of his divine Master, to guard against any abuse of the doctrines of our Christian covenant. "What shall we say then?" is his language, "shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin"—both by our profession as Christians and by the inner workings of the Holy Spirit—"live any longer therein. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death<sup>3</sup>?" By their profession at baptism they renounced whatever was in accordance with the evil customs of the world, and the accompanying grace of God wrought holy dispositions in those who rightly received the sacred ordinance. Therefore, as Christ died and rose again, so they who were baptized died unto sin and rose to a new and heavenly life; so that whether Jews or Gentiles they were now "made free from sin," and having become the servants of God, "had their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life<sup>4</sup>." Again he writes, "We are delivered from the law, *that* being dead wherein we were held," as the wife is free from the law of her husband after his death. The Jewish dispensation had passed away. The typical part of it was fulfilled in Christ, and therefore, having no longer any significance, was abolished. The moral part of it is

<sup>3</sup> Rom. vi. 1—3.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. vi. 22. vii. 6.

included in a more noble and spiritual system. We are not free from obligation to serve our Maker and Lord, in being delivered from burdensome and costly services : nay, rather, the purpose of God in proclaiming a more spiritual system is, that we should serve Him “in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter”—with the readiness and power of a new and holy nature, and not by a mere outward and literal obedience.

When writing to the Corinthians the same wise “master-builder” asserts with equal care the completeness of the Christian dispensation as a system of moral and spiritual duties. He is explaining an apparent inconsistency in his treatment of Jews and Gentiles by the assertion of his one principle—love to all men—manifested in ceaseless attempts to promote their spiritual welfare. “And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. . . . To them that are without law<sup>1</sup>”—or unconnected with the Jewish dispensation of which the law was the representative—“as without law.” Here perceiving that an evil mind might take occasion to make the Gospel the handmaid to sin by a corrupt interpretation of his words, he adds, “being not without law to God, but *under the law to Christ.*” Here is the key to this and to many other parts of the Apostle’s writings. We are no longer bound to the Mosaic economy. We are free from its ceremonial services. We are also free

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21.

from the law<sup>2</sup> as the *primary* condition of acceptance with God; for were we so held by it none could be saved, because all have sinned. But we are not without law to God, or that law which commands loving service to Him who hath redeemed us by the precious blood-shedding of his only Son; nay rather, we are under the law by additional obligations and in more spiritual and heavenly degrees. We have a stricter law-giver than Moses, and now, therefore, the requirements of the ancient law are fully expanded and set forth with the highest authority. "We are under the law to Christ."

The concluding parts of the Epistles of St Paul are beautiful instances of the practical nature of our Christian covenant. An ample statement of moral and spiritual duties invariably follows the exhibition of grace or mercy by Christ Jesus. A spiritual morality, embracing in its wide range God, as supreme, and our fellow-men, as heirs with us in the grace of life, is enjoined as the completion of the whole Chris-

<sup>2</sup> "Conditions are of two kinds, antecedent and consequent: *antecedent* when the condition is the cause of the thing promised or given, as in all civil contracts of justice, where one thing is given for another; *consequent* when the condition is annexed to the promise as a qualification of the subject, or an adjunct that must attend the thing promised. And in this latter sense, obedience to the commandments was a condition of promise; not a cause why the thing promised is vouchsafed, but a qualification of the subject capable, or a consequence of such great mercy freely conferred." Ball's Treatise of the Covenants. 1632.

tian fabric. It is the full development, the final working of the gospel of Christ, which provides forgiveness of sins and inward holiness for the penitent believer, and then lays down for his direction, as the outward and visible embodiment of inward purity, a system of pure and spiritual ethics. The infinite love of God in providing a ransom for us is the first of the causes which affect our salvation; and the last in order, connected immediately with eternal life in the kingdom above, is the purity of each member of Christ's holy church. "Obedience and good works," says the excellent Bishop Hopkins, "are necessary as the way and means whereby we must attain salvation, and so, though they have no necessity of causality in procuring it by their own merit, yet they have a necessity of order or method according to which God will bestow, and not otherwise<sup>1</sup>."

In the same manner the Apostle St James in reproving those who despised the poor members of Christ's church, states the true nature of our Christian system. In the first place, after the manner of our blessed Lord, he explains and enforces the ancient law. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' ye do well<sup>2</sup>." But since they were under a dispensation of a spiritual nature, inspiring generous sentiments, breathing forth love to all in opposition to the narrower spirit of the Jewish economy, they were

<sup>1</sup> Treatise on the two Covenants.

<sup>2</sup> James ii. 8, 9.



to expand this law to its amplest extent. They were under the "law of liberty," but not thereby were they permitted to sin, but were forbidden to practise even discourtesy. "But if ye have respect of persons ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." The gospel is a law of liberty, because it is less burdened with positive precepts than the Jewish economy, its laws being written in the heart. It gives fewer directions, because it supplies ampler wisdom. Our freedom of action is increased, not that we may sink deeper into sin, but that we may rise to a higher point in the region of holiness. Our privileges are connected with solemn responsibilities. The day is coming when the secrets of all hearts shall be tried by the gospel of Christ. "So speak ye, and so do," adds St James, "as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty<sup>3</sup>."

If there are any passages which appear to oppose this view of Christianity as a pure system of spiritual morality, substantially the same in this respect as the preceding dispensation, they are easily explained by the principles which we have already maintained. An examination of a few of these perverted passages will serve to destroy the ungodly theories which have been built upon them, and thus to confirm the doctrines which we are endeavouring to establish.

"The law was given by Moses," writes St John,

<sup>3</sup> James ii. 12.

“but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>.” The apostle is here declaring the superior richness and excellence of our Christian dispensation above that of the Jews. The requirements of the former covenant were more numerous than its promises, and hence it is termed the *law* in contrast with the *grace* of the gospel of Christ. Our Saviour has brought in a better covenant, “established upon better promises.” But to make the grace of God a foundation for presumptuous sin; to abuse the mercy of Christ, which was designed to subdue our rebellious nature, and to bring us back to God and holiness; to make the whole system of redemption an unmeaning and impure mockery;—this is indeed the work of a corrupt heart, animated by the Spirit of Evil. Every attribute of God bears manifestly upon it the impress of His holiness. His love is set forth to produce in us hatred of sin, since it is committed against our highest Benefactor. Hence, to represent the complete nature of our Christian faith, the passage quoted from St John must be connected with the words of St Paul. “*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*”<sup>2</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> John i. 17.

“Lex per Moysen data est, gratia et veritas per Jesum Christum facta est. Lex igitur per Moysen data est: facta est autem gratia per Jesum Christum cum per ejus spiritum caritate diffusâ in cordibus nostris fit, ut quod lex præcipit impleatur.” St Augustine, cont. Advers. Legis, c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Titus ii. 11, 12.

Another passage sometimes wrested to serve the purpose of a guilty and licentious perversion of Christianity, is found in the Epistle to the Romans. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth<sup>3</sup>." The apostle is explaining the method which God has devised for the salvation of mankind by Jesus Christ, and shows the necessity of such an arrangement, since the only promise which the law could make was this: "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." This declaration has become null and void as a *promise*, through the universal sinfulness of men, and thus, though the law is in itself holy and good, it has become through our wickedness the instrument of death. The apostle points to a gracious use which is made of the law through the mercy of God. It becomes by convicting men of sin the forerunner of Christ. Every ordinance, every precept is a sentence of condemnation, and tends to abase pride and self-confidence. It thus prepares men to receive as glad tidings the news of a Saviour who has died to satisfy the demands of the broken law, and leads them to welcome the promised Redeemer<sup>4</sup>. Christ is the end of the law, both by having fulfilled in our

<sup>3</sup> Rom. x. 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Finis legis non est ut peccator ex ipsâ justitiam quærat, quia violata condemnare tantum potest sed Christum tota respicit, ut ex eo justitia sit. Hoc autem legi non ex se competit quatenus domina est in fœdere operum, ibi enim in solo homine consistit et ab eo aut perfectam obedientiam aut maledictionem exigit, sed quatenus translata est in adminiculum fœderis gratiæ ministrat Evangelio: ibi enim manducit ad Christum quodque in se invenire nequit in ipso quærere docet." Ludovicus de Dieu in Poli Syn.

stead all its penalties, and by being the object for which it was proclaimed; that, being led by it to Christ, men might receive both outward and inward righteousness under the terms of a new covenant. By exercising faith in Christ we are accounted righteous before God and receive the promised Spirit, by whom we are sanctified and enabled to keep the commandments of the law<sup>1</sup>. Thus the law points to Christ as the "righteousness and sanctification" of the guilty and unholy, and the Saviour establishes the law by writing its precepts upon the heart, and making them effective. Love being implanted within leads to holiness of living, that we may please God. Thus St Augustine, "Christ is the perfecting not the destroying end of the law. That is called an end for which anything that duty may require is performed<sup>2</sup>." Thus the apostle writes to the Galatians, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> "Τί γὰρ ἐβούλετο ὁ νόμος; δίκαιον ποιῆσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἴσχυσεν, οὐδείς γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐπλήρωσε. Τοῦτο οὖν τέλος ἦν τοῦ νόμου καὶ εἰς τοῦτο πάντα ἔβλεπε, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ἐγένετο, καὶ αἱ ἐορταὶ καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ καὶ αἱ θυσίαι καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα, ἵνα δικαιωθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο τὸ τέλος ἤνυσεν ὁ Χριστὸς μερίζωνς διὰ τῆς πίστεως." St Chrysostom. in Epist. ad Roman. Hom. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, contra Adversarium Legis, Lib. ii. c. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 13, 14.

The law, therefore, being powerless as a covenant of life through the sinfulness of men, points to our Saviour Christ; and Christ establishes the law by satisfying its demands, and by providing for the fulfilment of its precepts by every redeemed and sanctified believer. "To him," therefore, "that worketh not"—who by the weakness and sinfulness of his nature cannot do good works—"but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness<sup>4</sup>." He is thus grafted into Christ the living vine, and, being united to the parent stem, receives vital sap and nourishment, whereby he is enabled to bring forth the fruits of holy living. The law can only condemn sin, and leaves the sinner helpless and in peril. The gospel does not abrogate the law, but unites with it a system of pardon and recovery. It provides for the payment of the incurred penalties by an infinite Surety, restores man to a portion of the glorious endowment of purity which he had when fresh from the hands of his Maker, and then bids him, with divine aid, to keep the law of God, not merely in a literal but in a full and spiritual sense<sup>5</sup>. It frees him from the galling yoke of the Jewish services and requirements—which were but a preparatory discipline,—to bring him to a more exalted and heavenly system. It delivers him from the oppressive weight

<sup>4</sup> Rom. iv. 5.

<sup>5</sup> "Non erat ista gratia in veteri Testamento, quia lex minabatur non opitulabatur; jubebat non sanabat, languorem ostendebat non auferebat sed illi præparabat medico venturo cum gratiâ et veritate." St Augustine, in Johan. Evang. c. 1. Trac. iv.



of the violated law through faith in Christ, that he may henceforward serve God with the pure affection of a renovated nature. He becomes a voluntary subject to the law of love, a law which binds the moral world in a beautiful harmony, as the law of gravitation binds together material things. "Brethren," writes the apostle St Paul, "ye have been called into liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. . . . Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ<sup>1</sup>." Moreover, the gospel promises eternal life, through the infinite mercy of God, to the faithful and obedient disciple of Christ. Thus the law becomes again, in connexion with the covenant of mercy, the bearer of eternal happiness; for God has promised eternal life to them, who "by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality." Hence the apostle exclaims with holy joy, that God has made known his mercy to mankind in leading them to holiness and everlasting life through the mediation of His Son, "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign *through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord<sup>2</sup>."

There is, therefore, no ground for the unhallowed assumption that the moral law, given to the patriarchs from the beginning, and afterwards to the Jews, has been abrogated by our Christian faith. It has been incorporated into the Christian dispensation and ex-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 13. vi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. ii. 7. v. 21.

panded to higher degrees, that it may be suitable to the excellence and dignity of this last and best covenant. The apostles of our Lord refer to it as a standard, and confirm its authority. "All the law," writes the apostle, "is fulfilled in one word, even in this, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'" In his advice to Timothy he refers to it for a general principle, from which he draws a particular inference. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' And 'the labourer is worthy of his hire<sup>3</sup>.'" There is an express reference to the ten commandments in the Epistle to the Ephesians which deserves a careful attention. "Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise<sup>4</sup>." What God proclaimed and enforced on Mount Sinai, he commands again by the mouth of his holy apostle. Since the relation, which is the ground of the duty, is the same, and since He who has appointed the relation and its duties is "without variableness," the moral precept of the one generation is the moral precept of the other, even to the end of time. In the same manner, the apostle St James refers to the moral law, and asserts its unchangeable authority. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, 'Do not commit adultery,' said also, 'Do not kill.' Now if thou com-

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. Deut. xxv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ephes. yi. 2.

mit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law<sup>1</sup>."

Having proved that the moral law existed from the first, and could not be affected by any change of dispensations in its essential parts, since these rest upon immoveable foundations; having shown that the grace of God, manifested in the gospel of Christ, is not opposed to the moral law, but is its life and strength; we shall now proceed to prove in the succeeding chapters that the precepts of the former dispensation are expanded in our Christian system after a spiritual and heavenly manner. "In illis quidem," writes Irenæus, "initium et ortum habuerunt: in nobis autem augmentum et adimpletionem perceperunt<sup>2</sup>."

An enlightened mind would anticipate such an expansion of moral and spiritual duty from the nature and circumstances of Christianity, before proof could be offered by particular instances. The great mark or characteristic of our Christian system is love. This pure and gentle grace sheds a holy light over every part of it, and endows it with heavenly beauty<sup>3</sup>. Pervading every part, it gives life and power to the whole

<sup>1</sup> James ii. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Irenæus, *adv. Hæreses*, Lib. iv. c. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "Discite quod libertas hæc major sit servitus, ut quod ante lex ab invito extorquebat obsequium minus per caritatem nobis invicem serviatis. Siquidem omne illud legis onus et multiplicia præcepta non tam exclusa sunt per Evangelii gratiam quam uno caritatis sermone breviata, ut diligamus proximum sicut nosmetipsos." St Jerome, *Comment. in Gal.* Lib. iii. c. 5.

body of Christian doctrine, and makes the inert precept a moving and quickening principle. It acts upon the very source and spring of action, and provides for perseverance in duty by making obedience a continual fountain of joy. Love displayed by another has a softening and attractive influence upon us. It has a tendency to produce a corresponding emotion in the object of it, a tone that shall respond in harmony with its own. When this holy affection is wrought in the mind, it displays itself naturally and without effort in the offices of kindness or the services of obedience. It seeks no higher reward than the smile of its object. It is a principle pure and disinterested in its nature, animating and ennobling in its effects. To this heavenly principle the appeal is principally made in the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When God spake to the children of Israel, His language was, "I am the Lord thy God that brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." There was in his dealing with the Jews a blending of awful majesty with his gracious regard. Such was the fearful nature of the scene when God appeared to them, that they were filled with dismay and terror. They besought Moses to speak to God in their stead, lest they should perish amidst the thunderings and lightnings that marked His presence. In our holy faith the *love* of God is most prominently displayed. The Son of God, the out-beaming of the Father's glory, came to this province of His dominions on an errand of love and mercy. "Herein is

love," writes the apostle St John, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins<sup>1</sup>." How just and beautiful is the inference! "Brethren, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

The Christian dispensation, in its declarations of the will and purposes of God, is richer than the former; since it is administered by his Son, who "lay in the bosom of the Father" from eternity. Our Lord declared of himself that he came "a light into the world," and affirmed to his disciples that he had made known to them all things that he had heard of the Father. He who knows all things directly by his own unoriginated wisdom; who sees all things in their true nature, apart from the guise of false appearances; who is Himself absolute truth, has given to us a revelation; and therefore one ample in its extent, and of a perfectly pure and heavenly nature. In enlarging the bounds of our spiritual knowledge, our Saviour has also increased our spiritual obligation. With such a law-giver, the author also of a system richly furnished with spiritual aids, we might expect that the requirements of the moral law would be expanded into a riper fulness.

The nature and purpose of the Church of Christ—the outward and visible expression of our Christian faith—will strengthen the argument for the superior

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 10, 11.



nature of our Christian ethics. The Jewish church was limited in its extent. Its glory was partly veiled by a cloud of ordinances, significant indeed both of sin and duty, and enveloping the promises of God in their mysterious import ; yet sometimes concealing from gross minds the truths which they were designed to shadow forth. Christianity is intended for the whole race of mankind. The Church of Christ is set upon the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. It is the last and noblest of the dispensations of God, and is framed on an ample scale, and with perfect wisdom, that in it the “ manifold wisdom of God<sup>2</sup>” might appear to all nations. It is the brightest display of His infinite love and holiness, the purest mirror of the attributes of God. It is to be commensurate with the wants and maladies of mankind, and is designed to be His instrument for restoring and renovating our polluted and guilty race. It is the channel through which God will cause His blessings to flow upon the world ; for, by the teachings and services of the church, the influences of the Holy Spirit are imparted to every devout worshipper. If such then are the purposes for which the church is established, without doubt the laws by which her members are governed are fully imbued with the spirit of holiness. Her polity is more pure and heavenly in every part than that of the former dispensation, that she may be perfectly fitted for the accomplishment of her higher design.

<sup>2</sup> Ephes. iii. 10.

## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE GREATER FULNESS AND EXTENT OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

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WE now proceed to shew the superior nature of our Christian ethics, by bringing forward particular instances in which the bare and negative precept of the Jewish law is expanded to a greater fulness, and by shewing that in our Christian system, in accordance with its more heavenly nature, the gentle and spiritual virtues are more fully set forth and enjoined<sup>1</sup>.

It has been previously asserted that the moral precepts of the former covenant were generally of a negative kind. A generous, nay, a just interpretation of these precepts would have led to the positive part

<sup>1</sup> "It is observable that in the Decalogue, so in the whole law of Moses, there are more negative precepts than affirmative." The Jewish rabbis affirmed that there were six hundred and thirteen precepts in the law of Moses, of which three hundred and sixty were negative. See Jeremy Taylor's *Rule of Conscience*, Part II. Rule 1.

Matth. v. 27. "Our Lord citeth not the command or text of Moses (Thou shalt not commit adultery,) as barely delivered by Moses, but as deformed by those of old time with such a gloss as almost evacuated all the force of the command: for they interpreted it of the act of adultery only, and that with a married woman."

of the duty, which was implied though not expressly commanded in them. The Pharisees, and with them the whole nation of the Jews, interpreted these precepts generally in their strictly literal and negative sense, and thus justified themselves in a narrow-minded and perverse, and sometimes even in a profligate course of life. They ventured to assert that if the outward action were not condemned by the written precept, they were guiltless according to the law. They narrowed up the command to the precise terms of its announcement, and paid no regard to its implied injunctions. Thus they made little account of impure desires or even of outward acts of uncleanness, if the negative command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," were not violated. They did not admit that, in forbidding the act of impurity, God designed to forbid whatever might be accessory to that act, or might naturally lead to its commission. Our Saviour rebuked their unholy system of interpretation, and expanded the precepts of the law in a spiritual manner. "Ye have

v. 33. "The law forbids perjury (Lev. xix. 12.), to which the Fathers of the Traditions reduced the whole sin of swearing, little caring for a rash oath."

v. 23. "Here those poisonous canons might be produced, whereby they are trained up in eternal hatred against the Gentiles, and against the Israelites themselves who do not in every respect walk with them in the same traditions and rites. .... For instance, 'A Jew sees one of them (the Gentiles) fallen into the sea: let him by no means lift him out thence, for it is written, 'Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbour,' but this is not thy neighbour.'" Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*.

heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’ But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart<sup>1</sup>.”

Many other such instances might be adduced from our Lord’s discourses, all tending to elevate our views of Christian morality. We shall however bring forward here only one other example, lest our remarks should swell to an unreasonable extent. The law had commanded, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart.....Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. I am the Lord<sup>2</sup>.” The Jews adhering strictly to the negative part of the precept, and interpreting the positive part of it in a narrow spirit, maintained that they were not bound to love or assist the Gentiles, whom they were wont to consider as outcasts and enemies: nay more, they thought themselves bound to hate all other nations as hostile to their faith and country. To this perverse gloss on the former law our Lord alludes, and in rebuking the harsh and uncharitable judgment of the Jews, he lays down the sublimest law of our Christian code. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy:’ but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye

<sup>1</sup> Matth. v. 27—29.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xix. 17, 18.

may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh the sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust<sup>3</sup>." In the same spirit the apostle St Paul writes, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath<sup>4</sup>." Then follows the ripe and full injunction of Christian kindness; "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head."

In another passage the apostle St Paul gives an important illustration of the principle which we are now endeavouring to maintain. He confirms the authority of the precept, "Thou shalt not steal," but adds to the negative direction a Christian exhortation to a positive duty. It is interesting to observe how the precept grows under the apostle's hand into the ripe fulness of a Christian law. It becomes first a precept enjoining godly industry, and then rises to an indirect command to Christian charity and beneficence. "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth<sup>5</sup>."

It is also observable that, in accordance with the spiritual nature of Christianity, the virtues of gentleness and humility, the love of things heavenly and pure, the duty of submission to violence and reproach, and of

<sup>3</sup> Matth. v. 43—45.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xii. 19, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ephes. iv. 28.



zeal in the promotion of the spiritual and temporal prosperity of others,—all are more fully exhibited and more earnestly enforced in the new than in the former dispensation. They are exhibited before us in a perfect and heavenly manner in the life of our blessed Lord, who is the embodiment of Christian virtue, the example which we must follow in all things in which the finite can imitate the Infinite. Thus St Paul writes to the Philippians, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross<sup>1</sup>.” In like manner the apostle St Peter speaks of the refined and gentle spirit of our divine Master: “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again.” The apostolic writings, animated by the spirit of Christ, enjoin a calm and holy frame of heart; a tender regard for others, as being “fellow-heirs of the grace of life;” a pure and fervent charity, ever ready to hope and to endure all things; a kind and unselfish disposition, willing to perform for others the offices of love. “Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves<sup>2</sup>.” “Be ye kind one to another, tender-

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 5—8.    1 Pet. ii. 21—23.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 3.

hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you<sup>3</sup>."

The inordinate desire of gain or of things that gratify the senses; the craving of power or pre-eminence, are the sources from which spring the evils of private and public profligacy, and the neglect of social and domestic duties. These evil passions are virtually forbidden in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and were repressed in the Jewish dispensation by many precepts and examples. But in our Christian system are provided richer measures of the grace of God's holy Spirit, whereby these evil desires are more fully expelled from the minds of the disciples of Christ through the power of a new and mighty affection. The Spirit enlightens their understandings to see the exceeding riches of that heavenly state which Christ has purchased for them, and which he has fully revealed: he works in them an ardent desire of things heavenly, whereby the mind rises above the riches that are temporal and perishing, and considers the hope of eternal things its best treasure. He shows the inferiority of earthly possessions by the principle of faith: He weakens their hold upon the heart by the principle of holy love. The precepts of our faith, which may be considered as the outward expression of the inner workings of the Spirit, are correspondent to this larger measure of the Spirit's influences. Thus St Paul writes to the Christians of Colosse: "Set your affections on things

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. iv. 32.

above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God<sup>1</sup>." The apostle's example is in conformity with this high tone of Christian affection. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." In the same holy spirit the apostle St John writes: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.....For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof<sup>2</sup>." There is nothing of this high and heavenly strain in the former dispensation, though a spiritual import might be perceived in its ceremonial washings, which were "figures of heavenly things."

On the sins of the tongue Christianity exhibits its heavenly temper, in forbidding not only the gross crimes of blasphemy, false swearing, or rude invocations of the Deity, but other offences which were not usually regarded as sinful. We are taught to consider the tongue in its unrestrained exercise as "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison<sup>3</sup>;" as being able to defile the whole body, and to set on fire the course of nature. It is the ready instrument of the evil that is working at the heart. It scatters abroad the moral poison that corrupts the

<sup>1</sup> Col. iii. 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John ii. 15—17.

<sup>3</sup> James iii.

minds of the profane and malicious, and thus makes it more extensively hurtful. The members of a spiritual system are, therefore, commanded not to allow in their conversation even unthinking and foolish levity. Words have a living power, and we are to take heed lest we should say anything inconsistent with the pure and high profession of a Christian : nay, more, we must take care that they be such as shall “minister grace to the hearers.” With what admirable delicacy the apostle St Paul represents the sanctity of the Christian character ! “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children ; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.....but fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints ; neither filthiness nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient : but rather giving of thanks<sup>4</sup>.” The Pharisees were wont to teach, from a perversion of the third commandment, that oaths were not criminal, if men did not swear by Jehovah. “But I say unto you,” says our divine Lawgiver, “Swear not at all ; neither by heaven ; for it is God’s throne : nor by the earth ; for it is his footstool.....let your conversation be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil<sup>5</sup>.”

Under the hallowing influence of Christianity the domestic duties are invested with a higher sanctity and are enjoined with greater force. It is easy to perceive

<sup>4</sup> Ephes. v. 1—4.

<sup>5</sup> Matth. v. 34—37.

that the permission to divorce, given to the Jews because of their perverseness, had a tendency to make the marriage bond less holy; to weaken the hold which the domestic charities have upon the heart; and to place the female sex in a dependant and servile state. Christianity has made the conjugal union indissoluble, save for one great violation of the marriage covenant, and has raised it to a spiritual and holy import, by making it the visible image of the union between Christ and his church. The greater domestic purity of Christian families; the elevation and refinement which the female sex has enjoyed in modern ages; the humanizing and hallowing influences at work upon the usages of societies and nations;—all these blessings are mainly attributable to the spirit and the precepts of our Christian code. Christianity provides for the peace and well-being of communities by the right ordering of families. It throws a sacred barrier round the family circle, and heightens the instinct of natural affection into a high privilege and religious duty. To each member of the household it gives suitable directions<sup>1</sup>—to the husband, that he love his wife “as Christ loved the church,” and to the wife that “she reverence her husband;” to children that they be respectful and obedient to their parents, and to parents that they be kind and provident towards their offspring; to masters that they be forbearing, since they also have a Master in heaven, and to servants that they be diligent and conscientious;—

<sup>1</sup> Coloss. iii. 18—22. Ephes. v. and vi. 1 Pet. ii. and iii.



to all it enjoins suitable affections and duties which spring from love, its one supreme and heavenly principle.

Nor can we omit to notice the ample range which our Christian affection is commanded to occupy. The barriers that divided the Jew and the Gentile are now removed. Christianity commands us to embrace all that come within our reach, in our kindness and good-will. It knows nothing of climate or hue, and commands us to acknowledge all men as brethren. It teaches us to "honour all men"<sup>2</sup> by revealing to us, that the death of Christ has purchased inestimable blessings for every individual of our race, and made him capable of attaining to the boundless happiness of eternal life. It exhorts us "to do good unto all men"<sup>3</sup>. It is at war with narrow prejudices, and proclaims universal peace and love. The simple fact of a common humanity furnishes a claim for Christian sympathy and affection. The church of Christ is designed to include all the nations of the earth within her pale, and to make of these different families and tribes one great community, united spiritually by the bond of a common redemption, and animated by the same holy spirit. The evil passions of our nature may check this design. The selfish policy of nations may oppose it. The pride and jealousy of different countries may long keep them hostile to each

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. vi. 10.

other. But there shall be at length "one fold" under "one shepherd." The common attributes of the Christian character shall triumph over the differences of clime and language, and unite mankind into one pure and heavenly brotherhood.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### ON THE PRINCIPLES AND MOTIVES OF MORALITY UNDER THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.

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By the *principles* of morality, we mean the internal sources from which holy actions proceed : by the *motives* of morality, we mean those objective truths which, presented to the mind by revelation and embraced by faith, have an influence on the sources of action, and quicken them into life. It is universally admitted that, in estimating the morality of an act, we must consider the nature of the source from which it may proceed, as well as its outward and visible character. Herein morality differs from human law. The latter, from the imperfection of our knowledge of another's mind, cannot enlarge its field of action beyond the visible sphere of human conduct, except in a few instances of very partial extent. It seeks to know *intention*, for sometimes the intent enters into the formal nature of a crime, as in the case of murder in distinction from homicide. But human laws do not profess to punish a man's state of mind. Thus it does not punish hatred, though it seeks to know the animus of a party charged with the slaying of another, in order that it may determine the precise nature of the deed. It cannot even punish a formal intention

to commit a crime, if the intention be not made clearly manifest by some overt act.

Morality, then, takes cognizance of the source of an action, as communicating to the outward and visible deed a portion of its own nature. In the Jewish dispensation the principle of action was chiefly the *fear* of God, blended in a partial degree with love: in the Christian, the quickening principle is *love*, restrained and tempered by fear. Neither system is without these two important elements, but fear predominates in the spirit of Judaism, and love in that of Christianity. Thus St Paul writes to Christians, in reminding them of their privileges: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind<sup>1</sup>."

It is important that this truth should be borne in mind, since it explains how it is that Christian obedience is of a high and spiritual nature, and that the Christian system is not burdened with many minute

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. i. 7. "Certe ergo repetitio legis Novum Testamentum significat: illud autem vetus significabat, unde confractum et abolitum est: maxime quoniam cum secundo lex datur, nullo terrore datur sicut illa in tanto strepitu ignium, nubium et tubarum, unde tremefactus populos dixit, 'Non loquatur Deus ad nos ne moriamur;' unde significatur timor esse in veteri Testamento; in Novo, dilectio." St Augustine, Quæstiones in Exod. Lib. II. c. 2. (On the two succeeding tables given to Moses.)

ὁ μὲν νόμος πνεῦμα δουλείας ἐδίδου πρὸς φόβον, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα τῆς υἰοθεσίας ὁ Χριστὸς εἰς ἐλευθερίαν. Cyril of Alex. Comm. in Johan. Evang.

directions and observances. A loving spirit can be largely trusted. It will endeavour to please its object, and will do so from its own animating impulses. It does not require the same minute commands as the spirit of a servant, and yet its obedience is more ample and energetic than that of servitude. Love is ever prompt and quick in its movements: fear acts with slowness and constraint. Love has its gratification and reward in the very act of obedience: fear is mercenary and selfish. Love with a joyous readiness seeks to achieve great things: fear is contracted in its range, and is content with the smallest measure of duty. Such are the different natures and effects of the characteristic principle of each system, and the precepts of the two systems are correspondent to them. The spirit of Judaism was not adapted to the evangelizing of the world, or for binding the nations of the earth in one common brotherhood. Christianity is of a generous and harmonizing temper; capable of great sacrifices, resolute in the labours of affection, and animated by an ever-acting impulse that provides for the continuance of exertion.

To such a spirit the enlarged commission, the noble philanthropy, the purer morality of our Christian system is especially adapted. Such demands could not have been made of Judaism. We are taught by Christianity to offer all our endowments of mind and heart, in a generous and holy spirit, to our heavenly Saviour and Lord. We are brought by her to a more intimate



communion with our Head; and being taught the will of the Lord more fully, and being animated more powerfully by the Spirit of holiness, we are better prepared to do the will of God than the members of the Jewish church<sup>1</sup>. Thus our Lord, when introducing His disciples into the privileges of the new and better covenant, addresses them in this manner: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you<sup>2</sup>." We have in our holy faith the highest proof of God's infinite love to man, and the demand from us in return is of a corresponding nature. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren<sup>3</sup>." Such is the measure of affection demanded in our Christian system. It must extend, too, to every action; for without it no sacrifice is acceptable, no act of obedience is complete. It must reign in the heart, as the queen of all virtues; and where it reigns, it will necessarily work obedience to the will of its divine Author and Lord. St Paul speaks in strict accordance with the principles of our common humanity, when he makes this pure and animating prin-

<sup>1</sup> "When Christ came he gave perfect laws and more perfect graces: he made the capacities of his (man's) obedience larger, and fitted the law and the subject by even, natural, and gracious proportions, and permitted nothing that his Father loved not." Bp. Jer. Taylor, *Of the Christian Law*, Rule 7.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 14, 15.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John iii. 16.

ciple the source of all holy actions. Virtually, and as a cause, it is the completion of all duty. "Love is the fulfilling of the law<sup>4</sup>."

In the *motives* which Christianity presents for the producing of love and obedience, it is immeasurably superior to the former dispensation. The strongest impulse to love on our part is the manifestation of it by another towards us, and the strength of the impulse will depend on the degree of affection manifested, and on the manner in which it is displayed. In the Jewish covenant, the conditions are generally of a temporal nature, and the appeal on the part of God to the Jews was principally made on the ground of temporal blessings. The great deliverance which God wrought for his people with a mighty hand when he rescued them from the hand of Pharaoh, is a theme often brought prominently forward. It is made a chief motive to impel them to a willing reception of God's commands. "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me<sup>5</sup>." To this theme, and to that of the kindness of God in giving to them statutes and ordinances, the sacred writers of the Old Testament recur with joyous gratitude. God had not dealt with any other nation as with them, for he had made known to them his holy law. He had been their

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Exod. xx. 1—3.

guide and defence, and had given to them the promised land. He led them “ by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name<sup>1</sup>.”

The love of God towards mankind is most richly and fully displayed in the gift of His well-beloved Son for their salvation, and in the great and ample blessings which Christ has purchased and secured for His people. These things were dimly shadowed forth under the former covenant. Its sacrifices, its services, its prophecies, all pointed to a great Deliverer that should afterwards appear; but of His divine nature, and of the richness of His blessings, the Jews were ignorant, at least in the last and most corrupt part of their national history. To the height of spiritual privileges and enjoyments their earthly and impure ideas could not rise. Their minds were filled with glittering anticipations of earthly conquest and grandeur. But God had richer things in store for mankind, and in a more wondrous method, than they had conceived. His love was not manifested in the gift of wealth or earthly greatness, but in the far richer gift of his Son, who is the “ brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” The sacred writers, lost in wonder and gratitude at this divine exhibition of love, describe it in terms the most comprehensive and vivid that language can command. They add description to description, contrast to contrast, and

<sup>1</sup> Isai. lxiii. 12.

yet their words fail to express the infinite extent and worth of this divine charity. It is a love that “passeth knowledge<sup>2</sup>.” The angels are represented as stooping down from their lofty seats to gaze upon the mysterious scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary; where the Son of God wrestled with the powers of darkness for the deliverance of a world, and, triumphing over them, made a show of them openly. An infinite Saviour was needed in such a cause, and infinite wisdom and love were engaged in the great design. God was made manifest in the flesh, and by a mysterious union of the divine and human natures satisfied in his humanity the demands of the violated law, giving to his sufferings an infinite value by the infinite greatness of the Sufferer. Having wrought out our salvation, He ascended on high to intercede for us before the throne of God, and to impart to our race the rich and eternal blessings which He has procured for us by His death. Here is a display of love to which language cannot reach. “God *so* loved the world,” writes St John, “that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life<sup>3</sup>.” The apostle St Paul prays in the most exalted strain for the Ephesians, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 1—12.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 16.

all the fulness of God<sup>1</sup>." This love is both the standard by which we are to measure our love as Christians to each other, and the motive by which we are animated to Christian duty. It prompts with a gentle but constraining force to forbearance, to forgiveness of injuries, to kindness, and to the offices of holy disinterested charity. We are to forgive one another, "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us<sup>2</sup>." We are to walk in love, "as Christ also hath loved us<sup>3</sup>."

Christianity, moreover, impels to a high measure of spirituality and obedience by its full revelations of eternal things. The veil that separates us from the immortal world is drawn aside. We behold by faith things invisible to sense, and are animated to labour from the sure hope of eternal reward. In these respects we have a decided superiority over those who lived under the former covenant. They had indeed anticipations of heavenly joy, and of the resurrection to eternal life; but the knowledge of things eternal was so dim and obscure before the coming of Christ, that He is said to have brought life and immortality to light<sup>3</sup>. In the Jewish dispensation the promises for the future were

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. iv. 17—18.

<sup>2</sup> Ephes. iv. 32. v. 2.

<sup>3</sup> "Nonne ista omnia nobis præcipiuntur? Sed quære mercedem et invenis ibi dici 'Ut expellantur hostes a facie tuâ et accepiatis terram quam promisit Deus patribus vestris.' Quia non poterant capere invisibilia per visibilia tenebantur. Quare tenebantur? ne penitus interirent et ad idola laberentur." St Augustine, in Johan. Evang. c. 1. Tract. iv. See also Thorndike's Epilogue, c. 12.



chiefly of earthly and transient blessings. God declared to them that they should continue to possess the land which he had given to them, if they kept his statutes and ordinances : but if they should transgress and rebel, then He would “pluck them from off the land” which He had given them to possess<sup>4</sup>. If they were obedient, they should be exalted above all other nations ; but if rebellious, they should become a by-word and a reproach among all people. The covenant which God has made with us in Christ, is said by the apostle St Paul to be a “better covenant,” established upon “better promises.” “And *this* is the promise that he hath promised us,” writes St John, “even eternal life<sup>5</sup>.”

The descriptions which the New Testament gives of the glory of that state which the redeemed enjoy before the throne of God, are of the most exalted and splendid kind. Much that is written concerning the heavenly world must be considered figurative, for we can know nothing of immaterial things, apart from consciousness, except by figure ; yet the description suffices to show that the blessings which God has provided for his people in the world to come, are of unbounded greatness. *There* the redeemed have rest from toil and warfare. No weapon can wound, no foes can attack ; for they are now removed from the suffering and peril of humanity. Their seat is the very shrine and temple of God, where He reveals Himself in light that “no man can approach unto.”

<sup>4</sup> Deut. iv. 1. and 40. xxvi. 16—19.

<sup>5</sup> 1 John ii. 25.

Their enjoyments are elevated and holy. Every faculty of the mind and heart finds its due exercise, and, being exercised according to the will of God, becomes a source of pure and ever-flowing joy. The soul, being thoroughly sanctified, is as a clear stream in which the holiness of God is visibly reflected. Over all these blessings Eternity throws its unspeakable grandeur, and gives to them a value in comparison with which the highest dignities and the amplest possessions of the present world are utterly insignificant. When to these joys are contrasted the fearful and eternal sufferings of the finally impenitent, we see how strong are the motives to obedience drawn from eternal things, when these are brought home to the mind by the uniting and vivifying principle of faith. They are motives which the sacred writers urge with great earnestness. They had a mighty influence in animating the early Christians to endure privations and perils, and even death, for the cause of Christ. "Life is sweet and death is bitter," was urged with worldly prudence and kindness to a martyr in the early ages. "Yes," was the meek and Christian reply, "but *eternal* life is far more sweet, and *eternal* death far more bitter." In the same noble spirit of Christian faith and hope the Apostle St Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus: "But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus<sup>1</sup>." "Let us go forth unto him without the camp," he

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 24.

writes to the persecuted Hebrews, when exhorting them to imitate their Master, Christ, "bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come<sup>2</sup>."

The rich promises of spiritual aid, under all circumstances in which a Christian can be placed, afford another motive to the discharge of all duties, however painful or perilous. From its abundant supply of spiritual aids, Christianity has been termed "the ministration of the Spirit," in contrast with the Jewish dispensation, which, containing the demands and penalties of the law unaccompanied with so large a measure of spiritual blessing, is called the "ministration of death<sup>3</sup>." Our Saviour promised to his disciples, and through them to each member of his holy flock, that He would be with them always, even unto the end of the world. He has assured those who faithfully serve Him, of an intimate spiritual communion with Himself and the Father. The hearts of his people become his temples, enlightened and cheered by his life-giving presence. He works with them in their toilsome and perilous course; so that the faithful, whilst relying upon the Redeemer in holy faith and love, have an interest in his omnipotent strength. Thus our Lord said to Judas: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him<sup>4</sup>." Hence the first ministers of the gospel were enabled to

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xiii. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. iii.

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 21.

triumph over the fiercest persecutions and the most poignant sufferings, for they were “endued with power from on high.” Animated by the high promises of God, and supported by the Holy Spirit, the faithful disciples of Christ have met suffering and toil in all ages with calm and patient fortitude. Mighty agencies have been at work in the church, and have wrought effects which no human motives, no human policy, could have achieved.

Being furnished with aids so powerful as these, the church of Christ is justified in demanding from her members a loftier measure of obedience than was required under the Jewish economy. Their outer life ought to correspond with their inner and spiritual life. “If we live in the Spirit,” writes the apostle St Paul, “let us also walk in the Spirit<sup>1</sup>.”.....“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy<sup>2</sup>.”

There is yet another powerful motive to obedience supplied by that mighty truth which Christianity alone has fully and clearly revealed—that the Son of God shall come again at the end of time, with unspeakable power and majesty, to judge the whole race of mankind. Language the most solemn and sublime is employed to represent the awful greatness of the scenes which shall then be displayed. The earth shall be burnt

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 25.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

up. The elements shall melt with fervent heat. All the pomp and wealth and greatness of the world shall pass away for ever. The trumpet of God shall sound, and immediately the graves shall be opened, and they that are in them shall come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. The sea too shall give up her dead. Then the great white Throne shall be established; and Christ, surrounded by angels and archangels, shall pass sentence on each individual in the countless ranks before him. Then the faithful disciples of Christ shall attain to eternal happiness with their Lord<sup>3</sup>. Then the impenitent and evil shall be banished for ever from the throne of God, and shall be thrust down into everlasting darkness and woe. To the height of such scenes the loftiest imagination cannot reach; but with the imperfect idea we can form of them, their influence is of the most powerful kind, when faith has given to them a present and living reality<sup>4</sup>. How solemn is the thought, that for every idle word that we may utter an account must be given at the last! How impressive the knowledge, that then all hidden things shall be brought to light, and that sin, however concealed, shall work the bitter result of eternal sorrow!

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xxv. Rev. xx.

<sup>4</sup> “*Ἡμεῖς δὲ τοσοῦτον ἀδιάφοροι εἶναι ἀπέχομεν, ὥς μήδε ἰδεῖν ἡμῖν πρὸς ἐπιθυμίαν ἐξεῖναι . . . καὶ οἷς τὸ ἰδεῖν ἡδέως, μοιχεία, ἐφ’ ἕτερα τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν γεγονότων, μέχρις ἐννοίας κριθησομένοις, πῶς ἂν οὗτοι ἀπιστηθεῖεν σωφρονεῖν.*” Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christ.* c. 32.



How animating the recollection, that every act of self-denial, of labour in the cause of Christ, and of holy charity, is seen by Him who shall be our Judge ! The force of this motive is presented by St Paul in these impressive words : “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> Titus ii. 11—13.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ON THE OBJECTS OR ULTIMATE ENDS OF MORAL ACTIONS UNDER THE TWO DISPENSATIONS.

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IN considering the morality of an act, since man is not an independent but a created and dependent being, we must consider the purpose of the mind, and the object to which it has regard. In this part of our subject, as in considering the principles from which actions proceed, we are apt to fall unconsciously into error, by confounding the requirements of human law with those of pure morality. Human laws cannot adjudge upon the question, whether obedience to their commands arises from the desire of honour or from the fear of penalties ; for the well-being of the state or for personal safety. If the letter of the law be observed, the obedience is legally sufficient, from whatever purpose or intent the law may have been fulfilled. But every revelation from God, making known to us our relations to Him as our heavenly Father, requires that, besides the outward act of obedience to God's commands, there should be a distinct acknowledgment of his claims, and an offering to Him of that which has been wrought by his gracious

aid. As all things, except sin, are by Him, so all things ought to be for His glory.

We recognize in the selfishness of man's purposes a decisive proof of his separation from God and of his spiritual debasement. He was created for God, that he might shew forth the perfections of his Maker by the excellence and purity of his nature; that he might be an intelligent witness of the glorious works of God, and be the offerer of a pure sacrifice of thanksgiving to Him; that in God all his hopes, his affections and his thoughts, might rest as their ultimate end. But man has dishonoured God, by making his desires rest chiefly on things earthly and sensual: he has wronged God, by making his purposes centre in himself. He claims the right of directing his affairs as his self-will may suggest, and for his own glory. Thus men practically say unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve Him<sup>1</sup>?"

Under the former dispensation there were many stern rebukes of this kind of spiritual idolatry. The children of Israel were solemnly warned not to forget the Lord their God, nor to suppose that their own power had obtained the blessings which they enjoyed. They were enjoined to remember with gratitude, that the Lord their Redeemer had brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and had favoured them above

<sup>1</sup> Job xxi. 14, 15.

other nations, that “they might shew forth his praise<sup>2</sup>.” They were to be his “witnesses” to other countries, by declaring his nature and mighty acts to the Gentiles. It is a ground of reproach and remonstrance against the Jews in the writings of the prophets, that they, though the people of God, had forgotten their Maker and Lord, and had wandered after other gods. They sought to please themselves and to gratify their evil desires, though God had formed them that they might promote His glory. Since they regarded not God, even in their religious observances, their sacrifices and oblations were of no avail. They were rejected not because they were evil in their own nature, but from the want of a right and holy purpose in those who offered them.

The superiority of our Christian dispensation consists in its ampler statement of the claims of God to our filial affection and obedience, and in requiring more active exertions in the cause of God, for the purpose of promoting his glory. We are reminded with great force and pathos, “that we are not our own, for we are bought with a price,” even by the precious blood-shedding of our adorable Redeemer. How just and forcible the inference! “Therefore glorify God in your bodies and your spirits, which are God’s<sup>3</sup>.” This holy purpose must extend to every action of our lives. It must throw a sanctifying influence over things comparatively indif-

<sup>2</sup> Deut. v. 15. . Isai. xliii. 10, 22—25. Psalm. lxxviii. Isai. i. 11—16.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

ferent, for God must be acknowledged in all things. We must walk as in His sight, and act continually for His glory. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink," writes the apostle St Paul, "or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God<sup>1</sup>."

In the former dispensation the glory of God is said to be displayed in the collective people, in their national deliverances and national worship, rather than in the separate holiness of each member of the church<sup>2</sup>. Christianity separates the individual heart and conscience of each, in making a demand for every thought and action to be consecrated unto God. It binds the disciples of Christ, indeed, into one holy body. It gains strength and symmetry by a just and well-ordered arrangement of individual elements in a system. It frames all the parts of God's work on the earth into a spiritual temple, founded on the apostles and prophets, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the "chief corner-stone." But yet the glory of God must be promoted by each member of the church of Christ, as if no other member were in existence. Each individual must himself be a living temple, animated by God's blessed Spirit, and consecrated to God in every part. Thus St Paul, when speaking of Christians, makes this strong affirmation: "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Isai. lxiii. 14. xliii. 21. with Rom. xii. 1. Phil. i. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 11.



we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's<sup>3</sup>."

The main principle of Christianity, love, is in strict accordance with these holy requirements. Love expands the heart. It leads the mind from the study of its own interests, and is thus the antagonist principle to the spirit of selfishness. It seeks the honour and well-being of its object, and desires to win for itself approval and favour. Therefore, our holy faith, in requiring that love to God shall be the reigning principle of the Christian character, provides effectually for the promotion of the glory of God by every member of the church of Christ.

Christianity, then, forbids us to make the applause of our fellow-men, or our own personal advantage, the ultimate end or object of our actions. Our Lord reproved the Pharisees because their alms were given with ostentation, that they might receive praise of men. He affirms that their benevolence was not acceptable to God ; because it did not spring from the spirit of filial affection towards Him, and had no regard to His honour or command. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them : otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven<sup>4</sup>." In like manner, if our actions have

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Matth. vi. 1.

reference only to the gratification of our own will, or to the accomplishment of our own ends, we are guilty before God according to the law of our Christian system. The slothful servant who had consulted only the gratification of his ease without reference to the will of his Lord, from whom he had received a talent, was condemned to outer darkness, where "there is weeping and gnashing of teeth<sup>1</sup>." It is the sin of mankind that, forgetting the claims of their Maker and Redeemer, they have respect only to their own desires and purposes. "All seek their own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's<sup>2</sup>."

It is necessary here to guard against some of the excesses or refinements into which many have fallen, from a wrong idea of the nature of that spiritual consecration which Christianity requires. Our holy faith does not demand that we should place ourselves in a stern isolation from the common sympathies and charities of human life, or that we should refuse to connect ourselves with others in the daily business of the world. In maintaining the supreme right and authority of God, it does not teach us to despise or neglect our fellow-men. It does not magnify a triumph over the common feelings of humanity, as the height of Christian virtue or holiness, nor prompt us to crush the guiltless affections of our nature. Our blessed Lord walked among men in a gentle and sympathizing spirit. He is touched with a feeling of our infirmi-

<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxv. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 21.

ties, for “he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin<sup>3</sup>.” If “despised and rejected of men,” he was on this account as well as on others, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief<sup>4</sup>.” He has thus taught us that the love and esteem of others are things desirable, when they can be lawfully obtained. They may be allowed to minister joy and encouragement: but the supreme and leading purpose of the mind must be to glorify God, and this purpose must be maintained, though all earthly blessings should be forfeited by adhering to it. It is not the destruction of other interests and purposes that Christianity enjoins, but the supremacy of the spirit of allegiance and subjection to God over all other principles.

Another spiritual refinement has been maintained by many persons of deep piety and learning, on the subject of seeking our own happiness by obedience to the will of God. It has been affirmed, that love to God should so wholly fill and animate the mind as to exclude every other motive<sup>5</sup>. We may not therefore seek the favour of God from any thought even of spiritual advantage, but from pure love and admiration of His infinite excellence. We may not seek for heaven itself on account of its rich felicity, but solely because *there* we shall be near to our heavenly Father. These are refinements on the simplicity of

<sup>3</sup> Heb. iv. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Isai. liii. 3.

<sup>5</sup> See Madame Guion's Works, and Arch. Fenelon on Pure Love.

the gospel of Christ. In seeking the favour of God here, and the vision of God in his temple above, we are at the same time seeking for our own pure and eternal well-being. Nor does it appear from the tenor of holy Scripture that we may not have regard to our own welfare, when it is sought according to the will of God, and in the possession of his smile and blessing. We are animated to endure hardships, to fight against sin, to mortify our evil desires, and to labour with patient zeal in the cause of Christ, by the prospect of eternal happiness as a *reward*, through God's infinite mercy, for our toil and suffering. Our blessed Lord himself for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, "despising the shame<sup>1</sup>." To Him who is without sin was the promise made, that in completing the great work of human redemption, he should "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied<sup>2</sup>."

Christianity, therefore, does not seek to crush and destroy the natural instincts of mankind, but to place them in a right position, to sanctify and elevate them. We naturally desire to have the esteem of others, and to secure our own well-being. Christianity teaches us to seek the first end only so far as it may be won by righteous means, and in subordination to the honour that cometh from God: and to provide for the second, by securing the favour of God and his spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Isai. liii. 11.

blessings. In uniting man to his Maker, it brings from that hallowed union a sanctifying influence upon all our faculties. It heightens and ennobles every thought and action, by connecting them with Him who hath made all things by the word of his power. It makes the glory of God the supreme and ultimate end of our being, and teaches us to admit other motives only so far as they are compatible with the love of His infinite excellence.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

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WE have thus endeavoured to shew that the relation subsisting between the moral precepts of the Old and New Testaments is one of substantial identity, connected on the part of Christianity with an ampler extent and fulness. These two dispensations are but successive expansions of one great system ; the rising of the light from the dawn of day to the noon-tide brightness ; the flow of the stream from the fountain-head to the breadth of the majestic river. Moral precepts are but the outward aspect, the embodiment of the spirit of the system with which they are connected, and must therefore partake of the nature of that system.

There must be an identity in the substance of the moral precepts of the Jewish dispensation and our own, because the facts of morality are in their leading outlines the same from age to age. Theft and adultery have been numbered among the vices, and justice and benevolence among the virtues of humanity,

in every dispensation that God has given to man. The principles by which these things have been determined to be right or wrong, are antecedent to all law. They were inscribed upon the consciences of our first parents, and the record has never been wholly obliterated from the hearts of their posterity. It is the excellence of Christianity, that incorporating the ancient principles of morality within her system, she has amplified them to nobler proportions, and fixed them upon surer foundations ; she has brought to light many truths that sin had long covered with darkness ; she has decided many things that were doubtful in their nature ; she has supplied new and powerful motives, and furnished additional aids ; she has connected morality more closely with religion, both in its source and in its end, and thus made it more fitting for the acceptance of Him who is infinite in holiness and love.

This view of the successive dispensations which God has given to man, is necessary to reconcile their differences with the *immutability* of God. “ I am the Lord, I change not,” is his own declaration. He is affirmed to be “ without variableness or shadow of turning<sup>1</sup> ;” and since there can be no change in his perfect nature, there can be none implying contrast or opposition in the out-goings of his nature. There may be different degrees in the extent to which he

<sup>1</sup> James i. 17.

may reveal himself to us ; there may be an expansion of his requirements, and the demand of a higher measure of attainment ; there may be richer influences brought to bear upon the heart of man ; and yet there will be only the manifestation of one unchanging nature in these revelations and demands. Thus we perceive that the Author of these successive systems and the Creator of the world are one and the same Being. There is the same constancy in the moral as in the material arrangement of things. The voice of God, though more full and distinct in one age than another, is still the same ; and whether He speaks to us by the works of his hands, or by the mouth of his servants, we hear the utterances of an immutable nature. He who framed the earth and gave to it settled laws, has impressed the same constancy on his moral system. There can be no more change in the elements of morality than in the substantial features of the ever-recurring seasons.

The higher demands of Christianity in consequence of its richer revelations are in accordance with the *justice* of God. It is a righteous law that the holy Scriptures have laid down on this subject—from him to whom much is given much will be required<sup>1</sup>. It is a law of universal acceptance, commending itself to every man's conscience. The child may do many things with impunity, on account of his unripe in-

<sup>1</sup> Luke xii. 48.

tellect, and yet the same actions may cover the man with disgrace. The wandering and untaught savage is not expected to exhibit the polished and gentle manners of the courtier or the student. In like manner, the spiritual service which God requires of those who have been taught by the revelation of his Son, was not demanded in an equal degree, from those to whom spiritual things were revealed principally by figure. We have in this last dispensation an ampler extent of knowledge, and a richer measure of spiritual influences. Our obedience is, therefore, required to be of a higher nature, and is enforced by more awful penalties. Christianity is thus a full revelation of *all* the attributes of God. It is an exhibition of his inflexible justice, as well as of his infinite love. We do not understand its complete and perfect nature if we suppose that it brings only a message of mercy to mankind. It speaks of high duties which all are commanded to do according to their respective stations. It tells of eternal darkness and anguish, as the bitter cup which they who reject its rich offers must drink for ever. “If they who despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace<sup>2</sup>.”

<sup>2</sup> Heb. x. 26—30.

This view of the practical nature of our Christian system is necessary for its *perfection* and *honour*. Could we suppose that Christianity was merely a series of splendid but abstract truths, having no reference to man's affections, and exercising no influence on his heart and life, it would have a maimed and imperfect aspect. It is designed for man's perfect recovery from the weakness and disease which sin has produced, and to raise him to a new and heavenly life. It must, therefore, be commensurate with the wants and capacities of man. It must provide for the ordering of his inner and his outward life; it must shew what affections must be subdued or cherished, what objects he must regard, and what ends he must pursue; it must point out to him with fulness and distinctness of information what he must do, in all the relations and offices of life, that he may be pleasing unto God. Our holy faith does all this. It supplies knowledge, but not as an end in which we may rest and be satisfied. Knowledge is given, that it may lead us to holiness and to eternal life. The truths which it proclaims must not float upon the surface of the understanding, but must be embodied in the mind, penetrating into the inmost recesses of our nature and prompting to holy affections and pureness of living. We must become "wise unto salvation."

The errors into which some have fallen on this important subject have arisen from not considering the perfect symmetry and completeness of our Christian



dispensation. An undue and exclusive attention to some favourite portion leads to neglect of the rest; there is an isolation of important truths from others equally important; and thus the gospel of Christ, in which the “manifold wisdom of God” is most fully displayed, appears to be incomplete in its arrangements, and unsuited to its holy purpose. It is a great truth, that since we cannot be justified by the law, whose sole condition, perfect obedience, we have violated, we must therefore be justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also a great truth, that being justified, God sends his holy Spirit into our hearts, “that he may purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works<sup>1</sup>.” The ultimate end of Christianity is not to provide for us remission of sins. It looks beyond this. It designs to bring back the world, now degraded by sin, to its primitive purity. It provides for the forgiveness of the penitent believer, in order that he may be sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, and may thus glorify God, both in the devout affections of his heart and in the outward works and tempers of his visible life.

It belongs also to the *honour* of Christianity that her high moral requirements should be understood and admitted as well as her glorious privileges. No fouler insult and wrong can be offered to her than to suppose, that in offering mercy to the lost she weakens

<sup>1</sup> Titus ii. 14.

moral obligation: no baser injury can be done to the cause of Christ than to make his pure and holy gospel a ground and reason of licentiousness. This is to stain the very altars of God with pollution; it contravenes the purpose of Christ's coming, which was, that he might "destroy the works of the devil"<sup>1</sup>; it makes the whole scheme of redemption, from its first announcement to its accomplishment in the death of Christ, an unmeaning and useless waste of means, for if man may be saved while under the dominion of sin, Christ hath died in vain; it casts a foul stain on the holiness of God, as if His eyes could behold iniquity with favour; it poisons the very well-spring of life, and makes the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. The glory of Christianity is its pure and spiritual nature. When we come within its boundaries, we breathe the atmosphere of heaven. All uncleanness, even in thought, all grossness and earthliness of feeling are felt to be unhallowed intruders within its sacred pale. How grievous and offensive must it be unto God, when evil and presumptuous men break into its sacred ground, defile its holy temples, throw down its fences, and whilst wallowing in corrupt and earthly desires, offer unto God a sacrifice of their own invention! If the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up those who offered unto Him strange fire<sup>2</sup> under the former economy, how must his anger flame against those who pollute his temples now and insult

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Numb. xvi.

his holy name ! Other injuries to our holy faith may mar its beauty or impair its efficiency, but this inflicts a deadly wound. The very principles which were designed to be the antagonists of sin in every form are perverted to minister to it. Christ is made to league with the enemies of God and of righteousness, and the church of Christ, which was to be the refuge and abode of purity, is degraded to be a foul receptacle for all things base and accursed.

The high moral and spiritual demands of Christianity must be maintained, in order that it may accomplish its gracious purpose in bringing man back to God. Before forgiveness can be desired or sought for, a sense of sinfulness and peril must be wrought in the mind. We must perceive the depth of our fall and the vast amount of our guilt, by comparing our evil works with the height and extent of God's holy law. The law and the gospel are not to be separated from each other : they are necessary and harmonizing parts of one great system of redemption. The law in our Christian system convicts that it may save. It is our guide to the cross of the Redeemer. The glory of our Christian faith is, that it not only reveals and condemns sin, but provides also a perfect method of salvation from its guilt and dominion. But that the value of its promises may be seen and acknowledged ; that Christ our Head may be fully honoured as our Saviour, we must have just and full views of its requirements, as a perfect rule of

inward and outward holiness. In our complete and holy dispensation, “mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other<sup>1</sup>.”

Thus all the dispensations of God have the same aspect in their leading outlines. They declare the sad but evident truth,—that man has sinned, and through sin has fallen into degradation and sorrow. They declare that God has provided salvation for mankind by the atoning sacrifice of a willing and vicarious substitute. They unfold the rich mercy of God in Christ, and yet maintain the high requirements of God’s righteous commands. They shew forth the attributes of God in a divine harmony; justice sealing the forgiveness of the penitent believer in Christ, and mercy upholding the neglected and violated law. They do these things with different degrees of distinctness and force: but yet there is on them all the impress of the same hand. They speak in different tones but in a sacred harmony, by which they are recognized as proceeding from the same eternal and unchanging Author. In the words of one of the most eminent fathers of the primitive church: “As the chords of a psaltery or lyre, each of which has its own sound apparently not similar to that of another, seem to one, unskilled in musical harmony, to be dissonant on account of the unlikeness of their sounds; so those who know not how to hear the divine harmony of the Scriptures think that the New Testament agrees

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxv. 10.

not with the Old, nor the law with the prophets, and that the gospels harmonize not with each other, nor each apostle with the gospels, nor with himself, nor with the other apostles. But if some one come, learned in divine music, and wise both in action and in discourse, another David, which means one of skilful hand, he will bring out perfectly the sound of the music of God, having learned to strike suitably, now the chords of the law, now those of the gospel harmonizing with them, sometimes those of the prophets, and, when reason demands, those of the apostles agreeing with them, and of the evangelists which agree with those of the apostles. For he knows that the whole Scripture is a perfect and apt instrument of God, which brings forth from its divine sounds one salutary voice to those who wish to learn, a voice which allays and restrains the force of the evil spirit, as the music of David checked the evil spirit that seized upon Saul and oppressed him<sup>2</sup>."

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<sup>2</sup> Origen's *Philocalia*, c. 6.

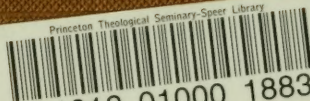








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